

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 1a





Social and emotional development

Babies are born ready to be sociable and from their earliest days they're interested in people. Often one of the earliest signs for parents that their baby is not seeing is that they don't look at their parent's eyes. This can be a source of great worry and anxiety and often triggers medical investigations and diagnosis.

Your baby may seem passive and not interested in you in the beginning. They can't see your **facial expression** of delight and respond to your smiles. It's difficult to tell whether they want to play with you when they don't look at you or make lively expressions. The most important priority at the beginning is to wake your baby up to the pleasure of being together. In the early days, parents start by taking the lead and babies tend to lie very still when talked to and played with. They go still because they're listening intently.

After a little while, babies start to show they want to be with you. Each baby has their own way of doing this, but often it's by cuddling in when held, being soothed by your voice and handling or showing pleasure when hearing their parent. This is the beginning of your baby developing the special and unique relationship with you that is called **attachment**.

With your encouragement, your baby will start to explore your face, grabbing and patting it. At this stage, babies often find faces more interesting than objects. Some children with developing vision will start to inspect your face visually if it's very close by.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about self and parent and others				
Alerting/showing awareness when talked to	1			
Relaxing when held	1			
Responding to soothing behaviour when crying	1			
Appearing to recognise and be most responsive to parent's voice eg smiling responsively to parent's voice/parent's presence	2			
Fingering parent's face	1/2			


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Looking at parent's face if very close Check Record of developing vision	2			
Responding to approach of parent eg by stilling	2			
Showing feelings				
Showing contentment	1			
Crying to express needs eg cries when hungry, uncomfortable or in pain	1			
Showing pleasure eg smiles, stills or makes excited movements and facial expressions during interaction with parents	2			
Cooing and gurgling when happy and comfortable	1/2			
Becoming attached to parent/carer				
Stopping crying when picked up	1			
Showing positive response to being lifted up	2			
Showing positive response to handling by familiar person	2			



You'll start to recognise whether your baby is crying for hunger or a cuddle. You may also notice that they coo and wave their arms and legs when excited. Smiling often comes later than in babies with normal vision – smiles may not appear until about four months and even then may not come very often. Your baby can however be helped to show a lively expression when having fun with you. You can find out what makes your baby happy, secure and contented by picking up and responding to the signs they give you.

Babies with limited vision sometimes startle and stiffen if they are picked up suddenly by an adult. This is because they can't see you approaching and

prepare themselves for being lifted up. Giving your baby careful forewarning of what you're going to do will stop them getting upset and withdrawing.

During this stage, babies become more socially aware and playful. They start to enjoy simple social play like rocking, singing, and gentle 'rough and tumble' games. By the end of the stage, your baby may be beginning to interact with you more directly, by waving arms and legs excitedly when you play together, or making vocal sounds when you talk to them.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction				
Enjoying cuddles from parent eg snuggling in	1			
Moving arms, legs excitedly when played with	1			
Adjusting body to other person's movements	2			
Making vocal sounds during interaction eg vocalising back when talked to	2			
Beginning to stop interaction eg by stiffening or crying	2			



Communication, language and meaning

Developmental journal · Stage 1a

Everything is new to babies when they first come into the world. They're specially drawn to looking at faces and listening to voices.

Your baby will respond to sounds but their listening response may be very subtle. Parents often can't tell at the beginning whether their baby is listening or not. If you watch carefully, you'll see when your baby is listening to your voice with interest and pleasure. They may become still and go quiet or stop crying. After a time you may begin to notice more active responses to your voice, such as smiling or your baby may move their arms and legs excitedly.

Parents talk to babies in a very special way that is different from the way they communicate with other adults. This style of talking is called **child directed speech** or 'child directed language' (it has also been called 'motherese' or

'baby talk'). **Child directed speech** uses short, lively words and phrases, lots of repetition, varying the tone of voice (often using a higher pitch voice), and lots of facial expression. This happens in every culture and this kind of speech encourages babies to listen and/or watch (if they have vision) for increasingly longer times. If you speak more than one language, it's important that you use whichever language is most natural for you.

Babies later in this stage listen more carefully and show different reactions to different voices, tones of voice and other noises. They begin to show they recognise and take pleasure in some familiar sounds in the home – eg the sound of their music box or running bathwater.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Listening to voice or other sounds especially when close eg baby goes still, quietens, stops crying, shows excited body movements and may turn towards speaker	1/2			
Reacting differently to different voices and tones of voice eg soothing and negative tones (smiles, cries, frowns, moves limbs)	2			
Listening and beginning to show different response to different sounds eg alarmed by loud noise, soothed by music	2			



Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Attending				
Attending to person more when they use lively intonation and baby talk (child directed speech) very close by	1			



In the early days, babies have very limited ways of expressing themselves or **communicating**, although they can make contented snuffling sounds or cry if they're hungry or uncomfortable. After the first weeks of life babies begin to express their needs in a wider variety of ways, using a tired cry or a more insistent hungry cry and gurgling to show pleasure. These expressions become more consistent and parents can then interpret what their baby is feeling or needing more easily. You'll see that often your baby just wants your physical comfort and company and is starting to develop different ways of getting your attention.

As babies begin to produce a greater range of vocal sounds, parents copy these sounds, which encourages babies to make the sounds again. Babies

make a cooing sound when contented – usually a short vowel-like sounds produced at the back of the mouth, eg 'a', 'o'. It's quieter and more musical than crying. When adults 'coo back', it encourages babies to continue and coo more.

Even in the early days, parents act as if the baby is intending to communicate – they interpret what gurgles or cries may mean. They have 'conversations' with their babies, leaving pauses as if it were the baby's turn to reply. This is the earliest form of conversation and is the foundation for later **turn-taking**. Soon the baby will begin to use their voice to **vocalise** back.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Attracting attention				
Trying to attract attention eg crying to attract attention and settling when picked up	1			
Attracting attention in other ways eg gurgling or using other vocal sounds to get attention	1			



Expressive language

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Making vocal sounds				
Making some non-speech sounds eg squeals, ahh	1			
Making cooing, raspberries and gurgling sounds	1			
Making conversation				
Vocalising back when talked to	2			



Play and learning

A newborn baby may spend most of their time asleep, feeding and crying, but they can be helped to start discovering. Parents and other people are the most important source of interest and parents are the first 'playmates', who make discovery fun. This is especially important for babies with more limited vision who may lack any visual motivation or incentive to explore.

Learning about sound starts even before a baby is born. Babies can recognise their mother's voice and even music while still in the womb. They develop very early recognition and memory for sounds.

Babies may turn as a [reflex](#) in the general direction of a sound. A baby with vision will then catch sight of what made the sound and start to learn where

sounds come from. At this stage babies with limited vision may not be able to see where a sound is coming from and will not automatically turn to sound, but you can help your baby learn about this as they get older.

A newborn baby doesn't know that there are 'solid' objects in the world. They learn about their parents and carers first (see [Social and emotional development](#)). Babies with vision start to notice contrasting and bright objects and lines and edges that are close to them and will gaze at them – they see that objects can move. Babies with limited vision start to learn about surfaces and objects as their hands or their body accidentally touch them.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about sound				
Beginning to learn where voice comes from eg finding face very close by	1/2			
Learning about objects				
Understanding that objects are there				
Lying on different surfaces	1			
Becoming aware of and fingering objects in their daily experience eg parent's body, mother's bangles, milk bottle, soft rattle	1/2			
Understanding about actions on objects				
Moving hanging rattle or soft toy accidentally while moving arms or legs	2			



Babies experience many new sensations through touch in their everyday life. They may snuggle into a soft rug, squirm as body cream is applied, or lie quietly when softly stroked and caressed. At this early stage your baby may start to scratch or 'scrunch' at your clothes or their cot covering or move their hand on the surface they're lying on.

A newborn baby will close their fingers and grip when your finger is placed in their hand. This is a reflex response to your finger touching their palm.

The hands of babies with limited vision need to be helped to 'come alive', or they may stay passive. This is a very important issue as hands are going to become like 'eyes' for children with limited vision.

Babies with vision start to catch sight of their hands as they pass in front of their eyes. They begin to watch their hands towards the end of this stage and to bring their hands to their mouth to suck. As babies with limited vision do not catch sight of their hands, you need to help them to discover their hands. Their first explorations are likely to be of your hands, your face and your bangles or necklace. Once your baby is using their hands, they can start to discover the world around them, including different textures and sensations.

Babies begin to open their hands spontaneously and then learn to close their fingers deliberately around an adult's finger. By the end of this stage they may do this with a soft small toy, like a squeaker.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning with touch				
Responding to different sensations/textures on body eg stills or becomes more active in response to a different sensation	1			
Scratching at and feeling clothes or surface eg scrunching own clothes	1			
Beginning to feel different surfaces and textures	2			



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Discovering hands					
Sucking or mouthing hands or thumb					
Becoming aware of hands eg noticing that bells on wrist bracelet jingle when hands move or watching hands (if sufficient vision)	2				
Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping finger					
Closing fingers as reflex when palm of hand is touched					
Closing fingers (not as reflex) when the palmar surface of fingers is touched	2				
Opening hand when something touches the back or side of it	2				
Closing fingers on parent's finger or soft toy using palmer grip	2				



Movement and mobility

Newborn babies move their arms and legs as **reflex** responses to their needs and environment. As they move, strength and muscle control is developed. Growing curiosity and interest in their surroundings gives babies the drive and incentive to move.

Babies who receive little information through vision tend to lie quietly or 'still' when listening to what's happening around them, and may have much less experience of movement. They often dislike being laid on their chest and there is little incentive for them to lift their head up to see things. This can reduce opportunities to develop the muscles responsible for head and body control.

You can help your baby to start feeling secure in different positions by making this enjoyable, for example by stroking your baby's body in different positions. You can also start to introduce your baby to the calming or exciting effect of body motion like rocking, swaying or being lifted up and down.

Your baby is learning their first **orientation** skills by adjusting to your body while being held or carried. Experiences of movement teach the baby a lot about their own body and where their body is in space. Body movements help the baby strengthen and extend muscle control and body co-ordination.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Body awareness – being comfortable in different positions

Lying on back happily	1			
Lying on tummy happily (when supervised)	1/2			
Lying happily on side	1/2			

Position in space – enjoying motion

Enjoying being rocked	1			
Enjoying being lifted up and down in space	2			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Exploring the environment – learning about the floor as a base				
Lying contented on a range of surfaces eg crib, carpet, bed	1			
Feeling floor/surfaces nearby when lying	1/2			
Extending movement and co-ordination				
Head control				
Turning head to side while lying on back	1			
Turning head to side while lying on tummy	2			
Attempting to raise head briefly when lying on back	2			
Attempting to raise head briefly when lying on tummy	2			
Beginning to lift up head and shoulders leaning on bent arms when lying on tummy	2			
Holding head erect while being carried or held upright	2			
Trunk (body) control				
Waving arms and kicking legs when excited while lying on back	1			
Adjusting position of arms and legs while lying on tummy	2			



Towards independent self-care

Babies are born with a range of **reflex** survival skills such as sucking and swallowing.

During the first few months of life, they express their care needs by crying and are dependent on parents and carers for all their physical needs. They have no control over being fed, washed, changed etc, but can see when parents are approaching and begin to make connections, for example – Mum means breast or bottle and milk!

When visual information is missing it's more difficult for babies to know what to expect when someone approaches. Babies with limited vision often startle and stiffen when they don't know what's going to happen to them.

Forewarning is very important at this stage to increase your baby's sense of security and comfort during early care experiences.

As sucking is a reflex action in a new baby, babies with limited vision often adjust to early feeding smoothly although some babies may have more difficulty.

Setting up regular routines for daily care will help your baby recognise and accept what is happening and feel secure.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Opening mouth in anticipation for breast or bottle	1			
Placing hand on breast or bottle while feeding	2			
Dressing and nappy changing				
Accepting having nappy changed	1/2			
Accepting being dressed	1/2			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Washing and bathing				
Accepting being bathed	1/2			
Enjoying being in the bath	1/2			
Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern				
Accepting bedtime routines	1/2			

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Stage 1b





Social and emotional development

Parents and familiar people in their lives are becoming very important to babies at this stage. They begin to recognise and show pleasure in the sound of their parent’s approach. They love being cuddled by parents and other familiar people. By the end of this stage, they **anticipate** being lifted up when they hear their parent approaching and saying ‘Up you come’, by making excited movements or even by lifting their arms and/or head.

Children who are beginning to develop vision will show great interest in your face at this stage and can learn to reach up and explore your face.

Babies show their emotions more clearly now, so you can detect more easily when your baby is enjoying a game and showing delight, or is feeling lonely, tired or hungry. Babies may chuckle and smile during social games that are fun.

During this stage babies begin to respond differently to the voices of parents and unfamiliar people because the special relationship or **attachment** between parent and baby is growing stronger. They start to prefer to be held by their parent, especially when distressed.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Learning about self and parent and others					
Responding to approach of parent eg showing excited body movements, lifting head	3				
Looking at and responding to parent’s smile <i>Check Record of developing vision</i>	4				
Anticipating being lifted up	3/4				
Showing feelings					
Showing a greater range of feelings eg delight, distress, excitement	3/4				
Showing delight eg laughing and chuckling	3/4				


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Becoming attached to parent or carer				
Enjoying cuddles	3/4			
Smiling more often for a familiar than unfamiliar person	3/4			
Preferring to be handled by particular people	4			
Showing pleasure, excitement or is comforted if their parent is close by eg becomes more vocal, more active or more calm	3/4			



Babies participate more actively in social games like rough and tumble, which often leads to chuckles and excited body movements. They enjoy rocking and bouncing games on the knee and start to enjoy bouncing along to a familiar rhyme or song.

Your baby may start to 'mirror' or tune into your body movements or vocal sounds. It may not be an exact repeat or echo, but it's enough to show that your baby is beginning to adjust their behaviour to fit in with yours. This may

take the form of swaying or bouncing, jiggling on your knee, moving arms, or making excited vocal sounds together. Moods like excitement or calmness may be 'mirrored' too.

By the end of this stage, babies are starting to become more active in social interaction – they begin to show when they want to stop playing and might also get you to repeat a physical action game.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)				
Smiling to get a response				
Enjoying interaction eg waving arms and legs and chuckling during interaction	3/4			
'Mirroring' parent's body movements eg holding hands and moving arms together	4			
Copying facial expression and mouth shapes eg sticking out tongue, opening mouth (if sufficient vision and very close)	4			
Beginning to indicate wants action to stop eg turning body away	4			
Beginning to indicate wants action repeated eg bouncing or rocking to start game again	4			



Communication, language and meaning

Developmental journal · Stage 1b

Parents continue to use **child-directed speech** ('baby talk') with their children. They often talk using short, simple utterances with a singsong **intonation** and lots of expression, with sounds going up and down. **Child-directed speech** includes special 'baby' words like choo choo, woof woof, dada and mama.

Babies listen intently to your voice and their own. They listen to familiar songs and rhymes and begin to listen to other people talking together. They become increasingly interested in speech and sounds in the environment and start to recognise regular patterns.

Babies become more aware of the different sounds around them and may respond differently to different sounds like the vacuum Hoover or clock. They begin to recognise regular household sounds and react in a more predictable way when they hear particular sounds.

You'll probably notice that your baby's ability to control their attention is still limited. They switch their attention to any new sound, object or toy. They begin to focus attention on one thing for longer – whether listening to something, or playing with an object – but still lose interest quickly if they're distracted.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Showing prolonged interest when talked to eg is more excited or pays attention or vocalises more	3/4			
Responding to music by swaying	3			
Listening to own voice eg 'ba' and repeats	3/4			
Beginning to listen to other people talking together				
Beginning to show recognition of familiar sounds eg excitement at water running in the bath or pleasure at return of brother or sister	4			



Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Attending				
Showing eager interest in anything new – switches attention to any new distracting event/sound	4			
Attending to parents, toys etc for longer periods if not distracted by the introduction of something new	4			



At this stage babies are beginning to recognise what happens during everyday routines. When hearing a familiar sound or phrase or smelling a familiar smell, they recognise and anticipate what's going to happen next. For example, babies hear the bathwater running and their parent saying 'bathtime' and they get excited about having a bath. This is called **situational understanding**. Later, the baby will start to make the link between the language phrases that go with everyday routines and the routines themselves. Everyday routines are therefore very important for language learning.

All babies need to hear **speech sounds** and phrases over and over again in order to recognise and eventually understand them. There are many

opportunities for you to say the same **phrases** again and again – whether you're changing nappies, giving your baby a bath, or singing a rhyme.

Apart from phrases, the same objects are also used over and over again in everyday routines. This lets babies begin to feel and experience an object and work out what it's used for. For example, a sponge is used for washing while a bottle is used for drinking. Direct, regular experience is especially important for babies who can't see objects clearly or the people who are using those objects.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations				
Beginning to anticipate what is coming next in a familiar routine (eg showing excitement or pleasure) eg spoon stirred in feeding bowl, bib on before feed, undressing for bath, sound of bathwater	3/4			
Recognising what objects are for				
Exploring object during the everyday routine eg exploring brush, bottle	3/4			



At this stage, babies make more deliberate attempts to attract your attention. Those with sufficient vision show more interest in their surroundings. They begin to look around and reach towards things that interest them. They will see that their parent is watching them. This is the beginning of **joint attention** when parents follow the baby's focus of attention and interest.

When babies with limited vision don't look directly, it can be harder to know what they're attending to or interested in. You will need to watch carefully to see the more subtle signs of your baby's interest and the ways in which they try to gain your attention. You'll also need to bring the world more directly to your child than is normally the case to help them develop their interest in the

world. You can start developing a way of showing your baby that you're involved and attending (**shared discovery**). This is helpful and lays the foundations of **joint attention** at this stage.

Babies with limited vision sometimes try to communicate their needs in a rather individual way, for example, through a particular body movement when they don't like something or a hand movement or vocal sound if they want something they can hear. They may make excited vocal sounds to attract your attention.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Attracting attention					
Deliberately attracting and keeping parent's attention through vocalising, excited body movements and facial expression	3/4				
Joint attention (sharing experiences)					
Showing pleasure when you join in play with a toy	3/4				
Joining in familiar joint game with toy	4				
Beginning to show interest in what you are doing eg reaches towards you and toy when you are playing with a musical toy	4				


Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Communicating needs				
Attempting to communicate needs eg whinging and squirming when tired or hungry	3			
Indicating wants activity to stop eg spits out food or pushes away	3			
Protesting if restrained eg makes body stiff and vocalises when protesting	3			
Beginning to use hand movements to show wishes, eg open/shut hands (I want) and pushing objects away (I don't want)	3/4			



Babies at this stage experiment with more sounds and **speech sounds** are now getting more varied. They listen to you repeating their sounds and this encourages them to make more. After a time they'll try to copy new sounds that you make. However, some babies with limited vision are very quiet and tend to keep their mouths closed. They may not see your eyes watching or your mouth moving or smiling – which are all incentives to vocalise more. They need to be given encouragement to make lip, tongue and chewing movements and form simple sounds.

Babies may start using sound combinations in their vocalisations when 'talking' to themselves and to you, ie they'll begin to combine single **consonants** and **vowels** together to make 'ba', 'bu', 'um', 'aga'. Then they'll begin to make double sounds. These are often made at the front of the mouth

and are easy to produce – for example, 'dada', 'mama', 'baba'. Babies with limited vision need plenty of encouragement to make sounds like this, with adults copying and responding to any attempts that they make – but they also need quiet times in their cot or during play, so that they can listen to their own sounds and experiment.

Babies at this stage continue to join in early 'conversation' with you. The **child directed speech** (or baby talk) that parents naturally use has a singsong **intonation** and leaves pauses that will give your child clues about when it's their turn to vocalise. Repeating the sounds a baby makes encourages **turn taking**.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Expressive language

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Making vocal sounds				
Beginning to develop some consonant sounds eg uguh/mm/hu	3/4			
Vocalising to self with tuneful voice for minutes at a time when lying in cot or at play and appears to be listening to own voice	4			
Producing an increasing range of consonant sounds such as b/p				
Beginning to babble in a way that is more speech – like eg ba, da, ga	4			


Expressive language

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Making 'conversation'				
Taking turns in making sounds with you as if having a conversation	3/4			
Copying your non-speech sounds eg cough, <i>raspberry</i>	3/4			
Making more varied sounds or vocalises for longer when talked to by parent	4			



Babies begin to notice the world around them and begin to reach out to it. They observe interesting objects and try and reach towards them in order to get hold of them.

Early patting and swiping at things is an important introduction to objects. This may come a little later in babies with very limited vision and you'll need to help them to find the objects.

When babies with limited vision hear an interesting sound, it's often difficult for them to work out the direction it's coming from, as they don't see the object that's making the sound. They become very still and listen intently. They have to learn that the sound is coming from a solid object and where that

object is in relation to themselves. This is called **sound localisation** and babies at this stage of development are learning more about this.

Babies start to take toys to their mouth to suck. They're very interested in the taste, smell and feel of objects. They begin to grasp objects for longer and start making deliberate actions on objects. They begin to learn about simple properties of objects by shaking rattles, squeaking squeakers or pressing a soft piano.

Remember, play is a child's way of learning and they learn through experimenting with different toys and objects.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about sound				
Orienting towards source of sound eg adjusting head or head/body towards sound	3			
Reaching for a sound source but not necessarily in the correct direction	3			
Reaching for a sound source in the correct direction in front of them at ear level	3			
Reaching for a sound source in an arc between ear level	4			
Turning to parent's voice when parent sitting near them	4			


Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about objects				
Understanding that objects are there				
Reaching for and grasping object on a surface	3/4			
Understanding about actions on objects				
Using an object to produce a sound eg shaking rattle/bell deliberately or squeezing a squeaker deliberately	3/4			
Using body to produce a sound eg banging on table with hands or banging feet on floor	3/4			



As your baby's hand skills develop they'll begin to pat and explore different textures and objects more actively, turning them in their hand. This develops into feeling the shape and contour of objects. Babies with limited vision may rely heavily on their hands for physical learning – it helps them if they have opportunity to explore and feel different textures and shapes in their everyday life.

Babies find their hands and play with their own fingers. They may look at them, too, if they have sufficient vision. They start using two hands together to explore objects and learn to pass an object from one hand to the other. They may reach out for an object with both hands.

As babies start to use their hands more, they begin to take objects to their mouth to suck and explore. This is the beginning of co-ordination of hand and arm movements.

Learning to grasp and then reach and grasp an object is more difficult with limited vision, since there is no visual information to help you adjust your hand in response to the position of the object. Babies need to be helped to develop an 'adaptive hand grasp' (ie adapting to what they're trying to grasp or pick up). The development of this skill can be guided by parents during play ([shared discovery](#)). At this stage picking up usually involves a whole hand grasp.

Learning to let go of an object ([release](#)) is another important hand skill. At this stage it's often not done intentionally and babies tend to just relax their grip on an object without noticing after a brief interval. This also happens when they're distracted and become interested in holding another object.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Learning with touch					
Patting and feeling textures and objects with whole hand	3				
Using fingers to explore different textures and consistencies of everyday things	4				
Discovering hands					
Playing with own fingers, grasping them together and/or watching them	4				



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Discovering hands				
Finding and grasping feet with hands	4			
Clapping hands together	4			
Exploring				
Bringing toys to mouth for exploration				
Exploring actively the shape of toys etc	3/4			
Manipulating toys eg by banging, shaking, turning them around in their hands	3/4			
Using both hands to explore object	3/4			
Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping object				
Holding toy in hand grasp for longer				
Holding a larger toy or own bottle with both hands	3/4			
Transferring object from one hand to the other	3/4			
Picking up smaller toy with whole hand (centre of hand and fingers around it)	4			
Putting both hands out to reach an object	4			



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Release object from grasp				
Letting go of object (relaxes hand passively) after a while or when distracted				



Movement and mobility

Developmental journal · Stage 1b

Babies gain a greater degree of control over their arms, legs and chest at this stage of development and the early reflexes that lead to early movements have gone.

Babies with sufficient sight begin to sit up with less and less support, but learning to sit independently may take more time for some babies with limited vision. They may not see the image of the room move when they're lifted or carried around and so are not able to use vision to adjust themselves and set the world 'straight' again. They need help to practice how to adjust their body position to maintain and recover balance when tilted. They may not have

sufficient vision to realise that the floor is a continuous solid base and may need help to learn **saving responses** – ie how to use their arms as props when sitting or falling.

Babies are sometimes reluctant to be put on their tummy and this is more common in babies with limited vision. If this experience is limited, it reduces opportunities to develop the upper and lower limb, **trunk** and head control which are all needed for rolling, crawling and shifting position from **prone** to upright.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Body awareness – being comfortable in different positions				
Locating objects placed on body eg a soother or bottle	3			
Locating objects placed alongside body eg a soother or bottle	4			
Enjoying sitting supported	3			
Enjoying sitting unsupported for a few moments	4			
Developing a sense of position in space/enjoying motion				
Enjoying gentle motion in a swing (age appropriate design)	4			
Enjoying vigorous bouncing games	3/4			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Developing a sense of position in space/enjoying motion				
Enjoying side-to-side rocking games eg rocking on your lap	3/4			
Beginning to straighten upright when tilted to one side	3/4			
Beginning to use arms for <i>saving</i> when rocked from side to side (puts hands out to the floor at the side)	4			



Movement and mobility *continued*

Developmental journal · Stage 1b

Babies with limited vision may not be as motivated to move as other children – they may not see other people moving around or any exciting objects in the distance that they want to reach. Babies need lots of experience of body movement and motion at this stage to encourage the desire to move – more vigorous rough and tumble and games involving rocking, tilting, rolling, diving and saving are all good. As body control increases, children learn to co-ordinate the movement of their limbs and body.

They may need to be actively encouraged to roll over, bottom shuffle and venture forward by sound and other stimuli, used to awaken their curiosity. They may also need to be shown how to roll and crawl.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Exploring the environment				
Experimenting with rolling	3/4			
Feeling surfaces other than floor eg sides of cupboard/sofa	3/4			
Rolling purposefully towards parent or toy	4			
Trying to creep forward towards parent or toy	4			
Extending movement and co-ordination				
Trunk (body) control				
Sitting upright with full support when placed	3/4			
Using hands and arms as props when sitting	4			
Sitting upright with less support when placed	4			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Extending movement and co-ordination

Trunk (body) control				
Beginning to sit independently for a short time when placed	4			
Rolling from side to back	3/4			
Rolling from back to front	3/4			
Beginning to roll from front to back	4			



Towards independent self-care

Developmental journal · Stage 1b

As feeding and care activities become familiar daytime routines, babies begin to recognise and anticipate aspects of what's happening. They recognise the bottle or breast as a source of food and may reach towards and hold their bottle.

Babies with limited vision generally follow the same sequence of feeding milestones as any other child and general guidelines should be followed on when to introduce pureed food and finger feeding. Nevertheless, the introduction of each new step needs to be done slowly and carefully. Babies with limited vision may take time moving from teats to spoons and from liquids to pureed and lumpier foods. As with hands, putting something like a hard cold spoon into their mouths can be unpleasant if they can't see what's coming. They need **forewarning** and gentle introduction to anything new that's going into their mouth.

Babies are learning to co-ordinate their hands and mouth and now become able to put things into their mouth. They start holding their own bottle for drinking. Finger feeding with pieces of rusk or toast is a good way to build up confidence in new tastes and textures. Some babies enjoy biting on finger foods as their teeth begin to appear. Chewing and swallowing is easier in a sitting position and babies can join family meals sitting once they're able to sit in a feeding chair.

Regular routines and games during care routines help babies to recognise and enjoy what's happening and to anticipate what might happen next.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Holding own bottle with assistance to regulate flow	3/4			
Holding own bottle	4			
Opening mouth in response to spoon	3			
Opening mouth in anticipation of spoon	4			
Holding additional spoon during feeding	4			
Accepting new textures and tastes – eg pureed food	3/4			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Beginning to finger feed – sucking on easy dissolving foods when placed in hands	4			
Attempting to bite piece off biscuit/banana or similar	4			
Dressing and nappy changing				
Enjoying being dressed	3			
Enjoying being in dry and clean nappy				
Anticipating dressing routines	3/4			
Washing and bathing				
Splashing with pleasure and enjoying being gently splashed	3/4			
Accepting face/hair washing	3			
Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern				
Beginning to recognising the bedtime routine	3/4			
Sleeping consistently for several hours during the night	4			

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 2





Social and emotional development

At this stage of development children show that they want their parents' company and actively try to attract attention. They respond when their name is called and **attend** to parents talking to them when they're close by. They also start showing more interest in other people beyond their parents, such as other adults in the home and brothers and sisters. As vision improves in some young children, they may start inspecting faces at very close range and even try to copy some **facial expressions** like a broad smile or frown.

Children start to show strong emotions – their likes, dislikes, fears and anxieties. They may show clear displeasure and protest. They giggle and laugh at amusing social games – for example, anticipating the tickle in 'round and round the garden'. Other people's feelings, like a loud angry voice, begin to be noticed and may upset them. You may find they enjoy and join in family laughter, even if they don't know what it's about.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about self and parent and others				
Seeking attention for self eg physical approach towards parent, 'calling' – shouts, listens and shouts again, tugging clothes	5/6			
Recognising and responding to own name (eg turning towards an approaching speaker, looking up)	5			
Listening to other people talking together				
Recognising some family names eg mummy, daddy or the names of brothers and sisters	5			
Showing interest in other children eg stilling and listening, vocalising or approaching	6			



Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Showing and understanding feelings				
Making clear protests eg making body stiff and vocalising				
Laughing in anticipation and during favourite games	5/6			
Copying facial expressions if parent is close up (less than 30 cm) eg smiling <i>Check Record of developing vision</i>	5			
Responding differently to other people's emotions eg big brother talking in cross voice, joining in family laughter	5/6			
Showing more feelings like fear and dislike eg grimaces when dislikes food	5/6			



Children prefer to be close to their parents, especially when in unfamiliar places, and are often wary of strangers. This is a positive sign of attachment and reflects their special relationship with their parent. It also shows their understanding that adults continue to exist when away from them (person concept). During this stage it becomes much more difficult to separate children from their parents – many children get upset when a parent leaves the room or house (separation anxiety). The return of a parent is greeted with pleasure. Sometimes children get upset when a parent returns, as if showing their displeasure at having been left in the first place.

Separation anxiety can be delayed in children with limited vision and sometimes they find it more difficult to show wariness and anxiety – but don't

assume that it won't develop later. It may seem they're fine being left because they show little reaction, but they may not realise that you've left the room or home. Separation needs careful preparation so that your child learns about parents leaving and returning and doesn't get too confused or distressed.

Children at this stage start developing clearer goals and purpose for their behaviour and begin to want to do simple things for themselves. This can lead to frustration and distress if they get stuck while trying to do something or if something they're enjoying gets removed or lost. This can be frustrating for you too if your child wants to go on doing something that you're trying to stop, like repeatedly banging a spoon on the table!

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Developing relationships

Table with 5 columns: Developmental goal, Card, Possibly, Definitely, What my child does and enjoys. Rows include goals like 'Showing attachment to parent/carer', 'Preferring to be with familiar people', 'Showing wariness of strangers', 'Showing anxiety if left alone', 'Hugging and kissing familiar people', and 'Reacting negatively to separation from parent or caregiver'.


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Showing attachment to parent/carer					
Showing positive reaction to reunion	5				
Exploring new environment and objects if parent is nearby	6				
Behaviour and self-regulation					
Wanting to do simple actions by self	5				
Expressing frustration and protesting if wishes are thwarted eg restrained from banging table	5/6				
Showing distress at removal of something enjoyable eg a particular toy	5/6				



Children continue to enjoy songs, rhymes and interaction games and this can include anything that is done within your family culture like rhymes, songs, prayers or other family rituals.

Children are now active play partners and can show you when they want to repeat a game and when they want to stop. They become able to join in some actions like clapping hands and singing along. They may begin a game – for example, holding out their hand for ‘Round and round the garden’. ‘Peek a boo’ can be great fun, pulling a small cloth off their head and waiting

for the adult to say ‘Boo’! Children at this stage also often turn one of their new skills into a social game –throwing or casting away toys off their highchair table so that their parents have to pick them up again.

They begin to cooperate with everyday routines and learn about simple social expectations. This includes a simple social skill like waving ‘Bye bye’, which can be taught.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)				
Recognising familiar rhymes and games eg showing excitement, smiling, stilling	5			
Anticipating actions in a familiar rhyme game, eg tickle in ‘Round and round the garden’ and ‘This little piggie’	5/6			
Actively making movements during a familiar rhyme game	5/6			
Beginning to anticipate ‘Boo’ in ‘Peek a boo’	6			
Starting off a social game eg pulling cloth on face, holding out hand for ‘Round and round the garden’, opening/closing hands for ‘Twinkle twinkle little star’	5/6			
Copying actions eg clapping hands, stamping feet	5/6			


Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)				
Beginning to join in turn-taking game with an object eg rolling ball, banging drum	6			
Beginning to join in 'give and take' games	6			
Beginning to imitate action with object eg banging a stick on xylophone	6			
Developing early social skills				
Beginning to wave bye bye when another person says 'Bye bye'	6			



Children at this stage listen with more recognition. They begin to understand familiar sounds – for example, that the ‘ping’ of the microwave means dinner is coming. They often enjoy silly sounds and have fun exchanging raspberries and other fun vocal sounds with members of their family.

Children love social rhymes or songs with actions and are beginning to be able to let you know in different ways that they recognise a song, want to join in and sing along or join in with actions. Familiar rhyme games can provide the structured framework for your child to take their first steps in communication (see Social and emotional development).

Children now copy what they hear more and this is often the way they learn to say their first words, so frequent use of the same words, phrases and rhymes is very important and helpful.

At this stage children are beginning to be able to ignore distracting sounds if they’re attending to something else (selective listening). They’re more in control of their focus of interest and can concentrate on a chosen activity for a longer time.

Your child’s attention span may appear to be very variable because they’re becoming single channelled – that is, they can only attend to one thing at a time. If they’re looking at and playing with a toy, they often can’t listen to you at the same time. When absorbed in playing with an adult, however, they may want to play a game over and over again and you may tire before your child does!

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Understanding the meaning associated with some environmental sounds eg hears sound of key in door and looks expectant	5			
Associating more distant sounds eg squeals when the vacuum cleaner is turned on and looks toward microwave or gets excited when the microwave pings	5			
Puzzled expression or changes behaviour when hears something new or unexpected eg a police siren	5			


Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Bouncing rhythmically when being sung to or listening to music	5			
Enjoying listening to the same simple story or song over and over again	5/6			
Attending				
Showing interest and paying attention to what people have to say for a short time	5			
Becoming absorbed in an activity and ignoring what is going on around them eg someone talking to them	6			
Showing selective listening – ignores sound/voice while concentrating on listening to something else	6			



Every day family and cultural routines and games are repeated. These allow your child to hear lots of familiar language many times over and this supports their emerging understanding.

Children are beginning to link familiar phrases with activities – for example, ‘Bathtime’, ‘Bedtime’, ‘going to the swings’. They’re also beginning to understand other familiar words like ‘No!’, their name and other simple phrases that they hear every day like ‘Clap your hands’, ‘Up you get’, ‘Sit down’. Children usually understand simple phrases before they can say them.

Children at this stage are also beginning to learn about familiar objects and what they’re used for (their function and purpose). Playing with everyday objects supports this learning. Later they must learn that there is a name or word label for each object. Children with vision hear you name an object as they look at it. Children with limited vision need to be touching and exploring or using the object when they hear its name being used in order to make the connection.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations				
Showing understanding of link between objects and familiar routines, eg bib or spoon for mealtime, flannel or duck for bath time	5			
Showing excitement or anticipation when hearing a familiar phrase before a regular routine eg ‘bathtime’, ‘go to swings’, ‘go in the car’	5/6			
Understanding what objects are for				
Making attempts to use objects on self but may not hold them correctly, yet eg brush on hair, spoon to feed, telephone to ear	5			
Playing with everyday objects showing how it’s used eg taking empty cup to mouth	6			


Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding words				
Understanding 'No' and stopping activity	5			
Recognising symbolic vocalisations and relating them to appropriate animals or objects eg 'brmm brmm; to car, 'eeoww' to police siren, 'miaow' to cat	5/6			
Understanding simple instruction in context eg 'give mummy a kiss', 'clap hands', 'wave bye bye'	6			
Recognising names of familiar objects eg bottle, favourite toy or teddy	5/6			



Children begin to attract their parent’s attention to things that interest them. If they have sufficient vision, they learn to do this using directed eye gaze, gestures (like pointing) and vocalising. Parents respond by attending to the child and to the object. This is called ‘joint attention’, since child and parent are attending to and focusing on the same object of interest.

When parents see what a child is interested in, they usually talk about it so that their topic of conversation follows their child’s interests. Joint attention and language about the same object help a child make connections between objects, events and shared meanings. This lays the foundation for shared understandings about the world and for language. (Shared discovery is also important for developing joint attention).

Achieving joint attention can be more difficult for a child with limited vision who can’t follow their parent’s eye gaze – and is not yet talking. They don’t know when an adult is watching them. Parents often say that they can’t tell what their child is interested in and attending to – for example, whether they’re listening to the bird singing outside the window or not.

Children at this stage begin to communicate their needs, preferences and wishes. They make vocal noises and use gesture to show what they want eg arms up to be lifted, hand reach to request an object. Children with vision learn to point to indicate what they want or can see. Young children with limited vision may not naturally develop gestures, but they may have their own signs to express their needs and wishes and can be helped to learn these, for example to nod or shake their head. Encourage any attempt to communicate.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joint attention (sharing experiences)				
Letting parent join in play with toys eg shared discovery	5			
Beginning to share interest in a toy eg giving toy, showing toy, pointing at toy, playing with a toy and then touching or looking at the parent	5/6			
Beginning to have attention directed to object by adult with voice, sound or touch or by a pointing gesture	6			


Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joint attention (sharing experiences)				
Showing interest in noisy tasks that adult is doing eg approaches adult to find out, reaches out when you're playing with a musical toy				
Communicating needs				
Communicating needs and wishes through vocalisations or actions eg, wanting to be lifted up, wanting to get down	5			
Making it clear through gesture/vocalisation when they want something to happen again, eg ra game to be repeated or more to eat	5			
Using gestures eg shaking head for 'No', hand out to request something	6			
Reacting negatively when toy is removed	6			
Expressing preferences				
Showing definite preferences for foods, toys and activities	6			
Beginning to choose between two foods or favourite toys with adult help (reaching for or pointing)	6			



Babble is now increasing with varied long strings of tuneful sounds such as 'bababa', 'dadada'. Later these will become more complicated, with sounds changing within the vocalisation, eg 'dadiduda'. Individual sounds may be produced clearly, but it's sometimes difficult to know what they mean. By now children may be using longer strings of sounds, which have the sounds, rhythm and intonation of the language they hear at home. Development of the muscles for talking include those used for chewing and therefore introducing more solid food is helpful for speech production (See Towards independent self-care).

Children may start to use some sounds consistently to mean certain things that family members understand (proto-words). You may say 'That's his word for...'. Your child may start to vocalise to let you know that they want 'more' or to play

a game again. Some simple vocalisations have a range of meanings eg 'dada' can mean 'that's daddy', 'where's daddy?' or 'I want daddy'.

One or two first words may begin to emerge towards the second half of this stage. Children with limited vision usually use situational labels like 'more', 'gone' 'up' rather than object labels first. Parents begin to recognise variations in the rhythm, melody and tone of voice in their child's utterances and give meaning to these utterances.

On hearing an adult say something, children may imitate words and phrases. This early repetition or echoing may go on a bit longer than normal in children with limited vision. Children show greater interest in conversation by listening, waiting their turn and responding with speech sounds.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Making vocal sounds				
Babbling repetitively eg baba, bababa, dadada	5			
Using varied sounds eg daadee, babu or badago	5			
Making 'conversation'				
Beginning to use speech sounds in turn-taking to hold a 'conversation'	5			
Waiting for speaker to finish before taking their turn	5			


Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
First words				
Making vocal sounds that are more like speech and are recognised as own 'words' eg 'that's his/her word for...'	5			
Making longer vocalisations that have recognisable words and sounds in them but whole meaning is not clear (expressive jargon) eg when playing alone				
Making attempt at first word – recognisable, consistent attempt at word in familiar situation/routine, eg 'no', 'gone'	5/6			
Copying a new word or features of it eg the intonation or vowel sound after it has been used eg hello = uhoh				
Making clear first word eg 'dada' for Daddy, 'Mumma' or 'Bye'	5/6			
Copying symbolic noises and 'baby words' eg 'woof', 'quack'	5/6			
Producing symbolic noise spontaneously eg 'aahh' when cuddling toy	6			
Singing part of familiar nursery rhyme tune	6			
Beginning to use word to ask for 'more' or 'again' in appropriate situation	6			
Beginning to imitate key words or last words said to him/her eg Daddy going in car. Child says 'car'	6			



The ability to locate the source of a sound is very useful for a child with limited vision, since it gives them access to their surroundings in a new way. It allows more accurate reaching and searching for objects and for people. It gives incentives for discovery and for movement and mobility. Children can track sounds or voices and move towards and find what they want.

Sound localisation skills continue to develop through this stage. Children usually begin by finding the sources of sounds on either side of their body above or below ear level. Then they start to find the source of sounds above their head and in different parts of a room.

Object permanence is also developing – that is, the understanding that objects are still there when not touched, heard or seen. As with **sound localisation**, understanding of **object permanence** develops in stages. Initially, children will search briefly when an object falls out of their hand grasp. Later they begin to search more persistently across a surface for an object that they've dropped. This gives them more incentive to move across the floor towards things that they've lost.

This understanding also allows them to enjoy hiding and finding. Social games like 'Peek a boo' and 'Hide and seek' can be great fun. Playthings can also be partly hidden under a cloth and then found again.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about sound				
Reaching out to source of sound and locating in correct direction – to each side at ear level – to each side above and below ear level	5 5 6			
Finding parent from voice in different locations at about two metres from child	6			



Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about objects				
Object permanence				
Playing 'Peek a boo' with cloth with parent	5			
Beginning to search for an object that slips out of grasp on a surface eg favourite toy or bottle	5			
Searching briefly and finding object lost from grasp	5			
Persisting in searching to find and grasp a lost object when within reach	5			
Finding toy when partially hidden	5/6			
Finding a toy when need to move or stretch to find it	6			



Children now spend much more time exploring and learning about objects and starting to use them purposefully. Exploratory play is important for learning about the properties of objects and for recognising similarities. Children understand that a shaker is for shaking, a squeaker is for squeezing, a drum is for banging. They need time to play on their own and to do their own exploration, as well as playing with parents and other people.

Your child will begin to learn about cause and effect and that actions on an object have an effect. They learn to bang two things together to make a noise, such as a beater on a xylophone. They learn that pressing a button on a tape recorder starts the music. Getting a reward from action, such as a pretty tune, reinforces a child's desire to investigate.

Children with vision work out that they can use an object as a tool eg to get an 'out of reach' toy on a rug by pulling the rug towards them. This is the

beginning of simple problem-solving. Children with limited vision need your help to learn to use an object as a tool and to make a start with simple problem-solving.

Play with containers helps children to understand how one object relates to another. Children realise they can take a toy out of their toy box or a biscuit out of a tin. Children with limited vision may be more wary of putting their hand into smaller and more confined spaces and need time and their parent's help to explore and to understand this concept.

Children begin to imitate and copy the actions that they see other people do. You may need to help your child to feel your actions or let them do them with you so they can learn to copy too.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Cause and effect (understanding the effects of actions)				
Beginning to understand cause and effect toys eg banging or patting keys on a piano to produce a sound	5			
Using one object on a surface to produce a sound eg banging an object on the table	5			
Making a more deliberate action with a cause and effect toy or sound making object eg pressing a key of toy piano or musical toy	5			



Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Cause and effect (understanding the effects of actions)				
Playing with more complex cause and effect toys: pulling a rod, turning a roller, pressing a switch or button for a (visual) light or sound effect	6			
Understanding how objects relate				
Realising that one object can act as a container for another eg taking a rattle, squeaker or string of beads out of an open tin	5			
Reaching inside a smaller container (eg toy saucepan) to find a toy	6			
Using one object on another eg banging a beater on drum or xylophone	6			
Playing in an appropriate way with different toys (eg ball is for rolling or throwing, a drum is for banging)				
Using a tool to reach an object eg use a string or rod to pull a toy	6			
Pulling apart two part toys eg duplo pieces or a ring off a stack	6			



Hand skills are becoming more refined. Children begin to use their finger tips more to explore the shape and feel of objects. Everyday routines, activities and objects offer many opportunities for experiencing different shapes, sensations and textures. The more meaningful these are, the more a child will be interested and curious about feeling and exploring them. This is an important time to increase exploration of the feel and shape of familiar objects and materials, as well as different food consistencies, to aid recognition.

Hands are becoming better co-ordinated and fingers are beginning to be used separately. Children begin to use their index finger (second finger) to poke at objects and to use the tip of their thumb and index finger to pick up small objects (pincer grip). Children with limited vision may continue to use

two or three fingers together for longer and use their thumb together with whichever finger first touches the small object they are picking up. Different hand movements can be used to slide switches, turn knobs, open and close hinged lids, and turn the pages of a book.

At this stage children learn to release objects deliberately. At first, they throw or cast objects away and later they move on to handing you an object and releasing it in a 'give and take' game. They'll learn to place an object on your hand or down on the table deliberately. They may begin to roll a ball to you or throw it as part of a shared game.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Learning with touch					
Using fingers individually and finger tips to feel and explore different shapes and textures	5/6				
Exploring everyday objects using hands eg cup, brush	5				
Exploring different food consistencies during finger feeding	6				
Exploring					
Using different hand movements to play with toys eg sliding a switch or turning a knob	5				



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Exploring					
Opening and closing a box with attached lid (eg to produce a sound, or find an object)	6				
Showing interest in handling books eg turning the pages of a cloth or board book – turns over several pages at once, feeling tactile parts of a book	6				
Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects					
Using both hands together eg holding a small toy/rattle in each hand or banging one toy against another	5				
Using index finger separately eg to poke at object or finger in hole	5				
Picking up small toy with thumb and two or three fingers	5				
Using two hands eg holding object with one hand while exploring it with the other or turning the pages of a book	5				
Release object from grasp					
Practising releasing by dropping or throwing object (<i>casting</i>)	5/6				
Offering an object but not succeeding in releasing it into your hand	6				
Deliberately putting down an object to pick up another or giving up an object in response to request or 'give me' gesture	6				



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Release object from grasp				
Letting go of object eg dropping toy into a noisy tin	6			
Rolling a ball as part of a game ie not 'casting'	6			
Releasing small item of food (eg an oat crunchie) held in fingers and thumb to mouth	6			



Movement and mobility

Developmental journal · Stage 2

As your child's experiences of movement increase they'll begin to develop more control of their trunk and more secure **saving responses**. Children with limited vision may hold onto their legs and lean forward to feel safe and will only sit securely when their side saving responses are well developed. They'll

be able to sit for increasing periods of time without support and their balance and confidence will grow as they develop understanding of the floor as a base.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space

Enjoying forward/backwards rocking games	5			
Tilting upright if tilted suddenly to the side when sitting	5/6			
Stretching arms towards the floor when parachuted head first towards the floor or bed (puts hands out in front when tipping forward)	5			
Beginning to recognise 'body parts' talk during movement activities, eg 'bend your leg', 'push your arm'	5/6			

Exploring the environment

Moving around the floor to touch or locate walls/barriers	5/6			
Exploring objects/environmental features encountered purposefully	5/6			
Showing interest/indicating desire to move towards interesting sounds/sights	5			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Extending movement and co-ordination

Sitting				
Showing saving reaction when tipped from sitting position	5			
Sitting independently	5			
Maintaining balance while reaching for toy from sitting position	5			



Movement and mobility *continued*

Developmental journal · Stage 2

Children with limited vision vary greatly in when they become more mobile through bottom shuffling or crawling. Some children become much more mobile and active by this stage. For others, the motivation to move may not be as strong and body strength, coordination and control take longer to develop. With encouragement and support, children will become more active in exploring and moving.

Crawling (or creeping) helps to practise weight shifts, balance and hip movement. Crawling is sometimes perfected while children also work towards walking. They pull themselves up to standing, reach for objects and may

cruise the furniture. Children who **bottom shuffle** or **commando crawl** (pulling along by arms) often start to walk later than other children.

Children with limited vision are more wary about being upright and unsupported than those who see well, but they can be helped to stand upright with **trunk** support and encouragement. Legs gradually become strong enough to bear weight although support is usually still required until balance improves. A few children may venture a few steps into open space at this stage, but many will keep practising for this by **cruising** around the furniture.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Extending movement and co-ordination					
Bottom shuffling or commando crawling					
Starting to move by any means – rolling, commando crawling , bottom shuffling	5				
Bottom shuffling or commando crawling in directed locomotion	5				
Bearing weight on extended arms and knees	5				
Crawling					
Crawling on hands and knees without stomach touching floor	5				



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Extending movement and co-ordination				
Sitting to kneeling				
Moving from sitting to tummy or crawl position	5			
Moving from sitting to kneeling by pulling on furniture/hands	5			
Moving from sitting to kneeling without support	5			
Standing				
Bouncing on legs when held in standing	5			
Standing holding on with two hands	5/6			
Standing holding on with one hand	6			
Pulling to stand against furniture	5/6			
Moving from standing to sitting position	6			
Walking				
Walking around furniture using side step (cruising)	6			



Towards independent self-care

Developmental journal · Stage 2

Parents vary a lot in how early they want their child to do more independent things like drinking from a cup or using a spoon to feed themselves – different cultures and homes have different expectations and preferences.

In this section, we cover what children are becoming *capable* of doing, even if it's not yet required in their home. Children are starting to learn to take drinks in a cup. They're trying an increasing range of foods with new tastes and textures, and attempting to eat with fingers or beginning to join in a bit

when being fed with a spoon. A child with limited vision may need to feel, smell and taste new food before eating it more often than a child who is able to see it.

Children with limited vision are also sometimes reluctant to touch wet and sloppy or sticky textures. They may need a lot of help to become more comfortable with eating soft and sticky foods with their fingers (see [Using hands](#) and the [Getting Stuck?](#) booklet for ideas).

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Recognising sounds/smells associated with feeding eg sound of spoon in bowl, smell of food cooking	5			
Accepting drink from spouted beaker	5			
Drinking from spouted cup with help	5			
Drinking from spouted cup with two handles independently	5/6			
Accepting new textures and tastes – lumpy food	5			
Attempting to chew lumpy food	5			
Chewing food with coarser textures	5			
Biting off piece of biscuit, banana or similar	5			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Attempting to pick up and eat pieces of food	6			
Locating own bowl to finger feed	6			
Beginning to attempt to use spoon – putting hand on parent’s hand during feeding	6			



Towards independent self-care continued

Developmental journal · Stage 2

At this stage, children enjoy removing some items of clothing and begin to help while dressing and bathing.

During everyday routines, help and practice is needed with physical demonstrations so that your child knows what your expectations are. Make sure that everyone who is involved does things in the same way and follows the same routines. Use simple, clear language to describe what you're doing

and when you ask your child to do something, like 'Lift up your arm', so that they'll know what you want.

Children may be sleeping through the night and less during the day by the end of this stage.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Dressing and nappy changing				
Holding hands and/or legs out to help with dressing	5			
Pushing arms, legs or feet into clothing when requested – 'push it in'	5/6			
Removing loose hat	5			
Removing socks or unfastened shoes	5/6			
Pulling vest off head during dressing	6			
Beginning to recognise 'body parts' talk during dressing routine eg 'where's your foot?' lifts foot	5/6			
Co-operating actively when nappy being changed	5			
Beginning to recognise words to do with toileting eg 'wee' 'poo'	6			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Washing and bathing

Offering or lifting arm or leg ready for washing	5			
Actively participating in bathing eg uses sponge on legs	5			
Playing with range of bath toys	6			

Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern

Sleeping overnight consistently	6			
Napping during the day reducing to one occasion	6			
Recognising bedtime routine	6			
Accepting of regular bedtime	6			

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 3





Social and emotional development

Children become much more independent at this stage and begin to direct their own actions (they become **self-directing**). They're learning that actions – including actions on other people – have consequences. They may push another child or pull their hair and make them cry. This isn't really being unkind since they don't yet understand about other people's feelings – it's part of learning about how other people react. They also know more about other people's intentions and realise they may take their toy, so they start holding onto things and getting upset if someone tries to take them away.

Children are also finding out about how to be the centre of attention – and that there are ways of getting everyone to laugh at them, by making a silly sound or doing a 'party piece' that everyone likes. They begin to want to

please others and enjoy everyone clapping and praising them when they've done something good. They may clap and praise themselves, too.

As children become more independent, they also become more aware of themselves as separate beings. This is the beginning of a sense of 'self' (**self identity**). They may become less cooperative as a result – for example, crawling or shuffling away when you try to change their nappy.

This is the beginning of children wanting to do things themselves and not always wanting to be directed or helped. They become more aware of their own goals and get frustrated and upset if they can't achieve them.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about self and parent and others				
Responding positively to praise and positive attention	7			
Becoming aware that actions can affect others eg pulling hair or pushing upsets another person	8			
Seeking to be the centre of attention, eg repeating a sound or action to make adults laugh				


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Showing and understanding feelings				
Beginning to show defiance eg moves away when asked to 'Come here'	7			
Clapping hands to express delight about what they've done	7			
Defending own possession or toy and getting upset if someone tries to remove it	8			



Although growing independence is a positive step forward in personal development, it's often challenging for parents, including those with children with limited vision (hence, the description 'terrible twos'). It can be very difficult to guide a child physically if they're resisting having their hands or body held or guided. Ideas that may help are given on both the Activity cards and in the Getting Stuck? booklet.

Although they're becoming more independent, children continue to show strong attachment to their parents and carers. They may cling, especially in new surroundings or when tired or fearful. Children with limited vision may find noisy public spaces particularly unsettling. Separation from parents and being left with strangers sometimes arouses anxiety and distress.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Showing attachment to parent and familiar others					
Playing happily alone but near a familiar adult	7/8				
Continuing to show strong attachment to parent and familiar carer eg reacts to separation or clinging when tired or fearful	7/8				
Showing anxiety if left with strangers	7				
Behaviour and self regulation					
Becoming increasingly independent and self directed	7				
Becoming more resistant to being guided or helped	7				
Increasing tantrums if frustrated or actions are thwarted	8				



Social and emotional development *continued*

Developmental journal · Stage 3

Children are becoming more active play partners. They're more aware of their partner's intentions, actions and words in joint games and may imitate phrases and parts of games and actions. They can take turns in simple games like rolling a ball backwards and forwards, responding to and anticipating

their partner's actions. They continue to learn about social expectations and can be taught to imitate simple social skills, like saying 'Thank you' or 'Ta' when given food or a toy.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction				
Participating actively in familiar social games eg may initiate or start repeat of game and perform some actions or phrases	7/8			
Joining in turn-taking game with object eg ball rolling game	7			
Imitating things they hear or see around them, phrases , parts of games and actions	8			
Waiting and anticipating action in games eg playing 'ready steady go' or tickle games or hide and seek	8			
Developing early social skills				
Waving bye bye spontaneously when adult says 'bye'	7/8			
Saying a greeting when another person says hello	7/8			
Saying 'Thank you' or 'Ta' when given a food or toy, in imitation	7/8			



Children at this stage are listening to language with more recognition and understanding. They learn to take part in conversation by listening and then taking their turn in speech or rhyme games. They love familiar verbal games and are ready to enjoy simple stories that use repetition and include lively elements.

They may notice small differences in their usual routines or games and you can help them with this by making deliberate mistakes or playing silly games

or by pausing and leaving out a word. As speech develops, children will start to join in by filling in the missing words.

Children can now focus their attention on something for much longer. They're more in control of their attention, which continues to be **single-channelled** – if engrossed in an activity they can be very difficult to distract and may ignore you if you try to attract or direct their attention. They dislike being interrupted when absorbed and can appear inflexible.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Enjoying nursery rhymes and simple stories and demonstrating listening by trying to join in with actions or vocalisations	7/8			
Beginning to fill in a missing word when adult leaves a pause – especially in rhymes or familiar stories/books	7/8			
Attending to speech directed at them and listening with interest to general talk	7/8			
Attending				
Focusing attention strongly on a single task or activity if involved in something – may be very difficult to distract	7			
Showing longer, sustained attention in games or interaction eg listening to a familiar story	7/8			



Children at this stage recognise how familiar objects are used and are beginning to know the names for things. They start to play at using some objects on themselves. This begins with a single object – for example, they brush their hair. Later they combine two objects – for example, they may stir a spoon in a cup, or brush someone else’s hair. These are important play experiences for children with limited vision, who don’t have the opportunity to see how other people use objects.

This early **pretend play** gives experience of actions using everyday objects. It also provides you with an opportunity to use simple language about everyday activities. Children with limited vision often need adults to start them off and to assist them with this kind of play.

Your child’s understanding of language is also moving on. They begin to follow simple instructions and to be able to choose an appropriate action in response. This is the beginning of understanding language without depending on clues from a familiar situation. It’s more difficult for children with limited vision, as they may not see the **gesture** (eg pointing) or **facial expression** that give extra clues about what you mean. Some children need other physical prompts to give them extra information at this stage.

Children learn the names of parts of their body and enjoy displaying this knowledge. Children with limited vision often find these words easier to learn than object labels, because their own body is more easily experienced directly than some other things.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Recognising what objects are for				
Using object on self holding it the right way, eg brushes hair, brushes teeth	7			
Using two objects together to show how they are used, eg stirring a spoon in cup	7/8			
Doing some pretend actions to an adult, eg gives mum ‘tea’ to drink from an empty cup or brushes daddy’s hair	7/8			



Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding words				
Handing over an object when asked to 'give me' – prompted by an open hand gesture	7			
Touching or showing parts of body eg 'tummy', 'feet', 'nose' on request	7			
Understanding 'where's mummy?..'	7/8			
Touching or showing items of clothing, eg shoes on request	8			
Following simple instruction, eg 'give it to...'. 'put in the bin'.	8			
Showing understanding of some familiar object words eg bib, shoe, favourite toy or bottle	7/8			



Children become able to follow their parent's directions to locate objects. Children with sufficient vision can follow your gaze or pointing gesture to find interesting objects. They can look at your **facial expression** to see how you view the thing that interests them – is it nice, scary, funny or surprising? They'll direct your attention to objects too, by showing you things, or by pointing and gazing at them. This **joint attention** to the same object is the basis for talking about the same object or event and developing shared understanding.

Parents need to watch their child carefully to see if they're trying to share their interest in a toy. Children with limited vision may use different methods such as holding a toy out or lifting it up. You can also help foster **joint attention** skills through **shared discovery**.

This is the beginning of intentional communication – ie communicating with a purpose. Children may hand you a toy in a 'give and take' game or take your hand to help them open a box.

Children are now able to make their needs known more clearly and to have definite preferences. Children with limited vision may make their needs known in more subtle ways than other children, so watch out for the way your child lets you know what they want. You can help them learn to **communicate** what they want by providing clear choices between two things, such as toys or foods.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joint attention (sharing experiences)				
Playing with object and then touching parent to share experience	7			
Beginning to lift toys to show parents eg holds out object for parent's attention or response	7/8			
Vocalising to gain attention or looking at adult (when close) to gain attention before pointing	7/8			
Showing interest in what adult is doing eg approaches to find out what adult is doing when they're making a noise	8			



Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Communicating needs				
Beginning to make needs known more specifically through sign, <i>gesture</i> or word eg tugs adult or pulls hand to indicate what they need	7/8			
Beginning to ask if hungry or thirsty	8			
Showing preferences				
Choosing between two items	7/8			
Indicating 'yes' or 'no' to show preference	7/8			



At this stage, children continue to copy much of what they hear said. This is a child's way of enjoying the sounds of language around them and of trying out new sounds and sound combinations. Children with limited vision often do this copying or echoing for longer than children with full sight. This is their way of keeping in touch with you and showing mastery of language expression. They enjoy the sound of particular words or phrases and may often repeat them. It's important that you help them to link the words they use with meaning. Ideas for how you might do this are given on the [Activity cards](#) and in the [Getting Stuck?](#) booklet.

The range of sounds children use increases considerably. Some children come out with longer strings of sounds containing one or two recognisable words. This is called [expressive jargon](#). Children often have one or two

favourite words or phrases which they use often – eg 'allgone', 'thatone', 'good girl' or 'wha'that'?

Your child may start to try and name one or two objects using simple language, like 'nana' for banana. Children with very limited vision often take much longer than other children to expand their [vocabulary](#) and need lots of help to learn that objects have names.

Parents often repeat their child's words and then say what they think their child is trying to say in a short sentence at this stage – for example 'Juice? You'd like some juice?' This is called [recasting](#). It helps children hear how their meaning is expressed in language by other people and helps them learn about the structure (or [grammar](#)) of more complete sentences.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
First words				
Uses lots of word like babble or jargon – sounds as if speaking				
Beginning to use a familiar learned expression, like 'allgone', 'good girl', 'oh dear'	7			
Imitating key words or last words eg 'daddy going in the car', child repeats 'daddy' or 'car'	7			
Using a few words consistently	7			



Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
First words					
Using a favourite word/phrase often eg 'allgone' appropriately	7/8				
Remembering little bits of tunes and will 'sing' them for self or others					
Joining in nursery rhymes and songs	7/8				
Linking first words to meaning					
Using situational words eg 'up', 'down', 'bye', 'allgone'	7				
Using word to make a request, eg 'drink' (may say 'dink' or 'oos' for juice)	7/8				
Asking for 'more' or 'again' in appropriate situation	7				
Answering 'yes' or 'no' when asked a question	7				
Making 'conversation'					
Using jargon and first words to take part in 'conversation' eg using some recognisable words to take turns with adult					
Naming objects					
Making word approximations eg 'nana' for banana, 'ain' for 'train'	8				



Play and learning

Developmental journal · Stage 3

Children are curious about new toys and keen to try out new activities. They like to repeat things over and over again as they practise what they know and enjoy doing and finding out if they can make something different happen. They're experimenting through play. Children begin to use more than one action with a toy and begin to show short **sequences** of play.

Memory is also improving, both of the immediate short term and longer term. Children begin to have a better understanding of **object permanence** and will move to find something which has rolled away and know where to find things around the house. Your child may find an object when it's completely hidden (if you show it to them as you hide it). Children often demonstrate that they remember a person or an activity by trying to repeat something they enjoyed with that person or expecting an object they associate with an event.

Children are learning how to manipulate toys and investigating how objects relate to each other. They become very interested in container play and like taking things out of containers or removing lids to find something inside. They take simple objects apart and later try to put things together – either on top of other things or linking them together. Some young children with limited vision take a bit longer to learn how to put something 'inside' a container because they need to be able to release things to be able to do this.

Children with more vision learn to stack blocks as their hand eye co-ordination skills get better. Children with limited vision are likely to learn about building more slowly and will often need your help to develop their interest in stacking toys.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about sound				
Reaching out to source of sound and locating in correct direction – above the head	7			
Finding parent in different parts of the room at increasing distance (3 metres or further) when called	7			
Finding parent in room next door when called	8			



Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about objects				
Object permanence				
Finding objects that are completely hidden eg under a cloth	7			
Searching and finding something that has rolled out of reach	7/8			
Cause and effect				
Persisting with an action or remembering what to do again after a wait eg turning a roller and waiting until tune is finished before rolling again or opening the lid of a music box to start the music	7/8			
Understanding how objects relate				
Separating objects made of different parts eg taking rings off a rod or pulling connected pieces apart eg interlocking blocks – ‘duplo’ or mega blocks	7			
Taking a small object out of a small container	7			
Beginning to understand about opening and closing eg box with a hinged lid or cupboard doors				
Understanding about separate lids eg taking lid with knob off container	7			


Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding how objects relate				
Putting object inside wide container eg biscuit tin	7			
Putting object inside narrow container eg beaker	8			
Replacing lid with knob on container	8			
Enjoying knocking down several objects stacked on top of each other	7/8			
Putting several objects in and out of containers	8			



Children learn to recognise different textures in a favourite 'feely' book or familiar object – for example, the bristles of their hairbrush. They're also beginning to enjoy opening and closing books and helping to turn the pages. Your child may become interested in feeling parts of an object, eg moving the wheels on a toy car, or the overall shape of an object, or feeling round the basin and handle of a cup.

Children's use of their thumb and finger is increasingly controlled and they can take small objects, like raisins, out of a small packet.

Children become better able to control the **release** of objects and they begin to be able to post toys, play 'give and take' games and place toys on top of each other.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Learning with touch					
Beginning to recognise different textures in 'feely' books and when exploring objects eg recognises 'bear's ears' and 'cat's nose'	7/8				
Exploring different shapes – using finger tips to feel parts of smaller toys eg wheels on toy car	8				
Exploring					
Crumpling and tearing different textures and materials eg playing with paper or bubble wrap	8				
Manipulating objects with many parts eg turning pages of book or parts of activity centre	7				



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects					
Picking up small object with thumb and finger tips	7				
Attempting to pick up smaller object between index finger tip and thumb (pincer grip) eg raisin or piece of cereal or string or getting a sweet/snack from inside packet with either hand	7				
Dipping an object into a pot eg cracker into cream cheese	8				
Release object from grasp					
Deliberately releasing an object when asked eg giving up an object when asked, putting an object in container or posting simple objects (circles and ball) into posting box	7/8				
Casting toys less frequent	7				



Movement and mobility

With continued encouragement, most children with limited vision will take their first independent steps at this stage. See the [Getting Stuck?](#) booklet for ideas about what to do if your child seems reluctant to walk. Although steps are usually cautious at first, they gradually become more confident with improved muscle strength and balance. Some children find that pushing a trolley gives them added support and confidence.

Children gradually become more confident about moving around and exploring the house in whatever way works best for them. Some children

are more willing than others to shift from bottom shuffling to crawling as they become more coordinated. Children start to climb furniture and your child may begin to crawl up stairs.

Children learn to recognise the location of familiar furniture obstacles in the house and avoid bumping into them. At times they may be discouraged by bumps and falls but this will change as they get to know the safe routes around your home.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space

Demonstrating understanding of 'up' and 'down' by moving body or object	7			
Beginning to recognise height/depth of furniture/features around the house eg crawls under furniture, over obstacles	8			

Exploring the environment

Reaching arms to objects/space above head	7			
Recognising features in different rooms eg sound of washing machine in kitchen, smell of toiletries in bathroom, feel of carpet in living room	7/8			



Movement and mobility continued

Developmental journal · Stage 3

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Exploring the environment					
Exploring rooms in own home independently moving in any way	8				
Walking barefoot on a variety of surfaces in and outdoors eg carpets, tiles, grass, sand	8				
Extending movement and co-ordination					
Sitting					
Sitting on low chair without support	7				
Walking					
Walking with forward gait when both hands held	7				
Walking forward when one hand held	7				
Pushing sturdy trolley type toy while walking	7				
Taking a few steps without support	7				
Standing without holding on for short period of time	7				
Beginning to walk without support	7/8				
Moving out of small space backwards					
Managing stairs					
Crawling up stairs	7/8				
Turning around to move down the stairs (facing stairs)	8				



Towards independent self-care

Children at this stage try to master new skills and become more active in self-care. Parents vary in how early they want their child to become more independent – different cultures and homes have different views and expectations. This section covers what children are becoming *capable* of doing, even if it's not yet required in their home.

Children with limited vision may seem more dependent on their parents for self-care and will need to be encouraged to take early steps in independence.

Children can learn to take drinks in a cup. They may be trying an increasing range of foods with new tastes and textures, and continuing to eat with fingers. They're beginning to learn to take food to their mouth on a spoon but are likely to be quite messy. This can be quite a frustrating time for children, as food often falls off their spoon. Children who get less information through vision may take longer to master independent feeding skills such as finger feeding and using a spoon. They're less able to watch or *imitate* other people's movements and will need to feel or experience movements while being fed, to learn what they need to do.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Beginning to indicate when hungry or thirsty eg finds cup, goes to fridge or highchair	7			
Understanding and adopting family meal time routines eg moving towards chair or sitting at table when told 'snack/tea time'	7/8			
Accepting new textures and tastes – larger pieces and increasing range	7			
Attempting to use spoon – can guide towards mouth, but food often falls off	7/8			
Using one hand to hold and drink from spouted cup with handle	7			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Locating cup placed in front on table or tray, and replacing it after drinking	7			
Holding open topped two handled cup to drink with some spillage	8			
Picking up small pieces of food to finger feed	7/8			
Accepting food from a fork	8			



Children become able to remove simple items of clothing and may start to enjoy putting on some items like hats. They can follow simple instructions like 'wash your tummy' when washing and bathing. As with feeding skills, dressing and washing skills may develop more slowly in children with limited

vision but you can help by using physical demonstration while your child is sitting on your knee. In this way they can experience the movement of your body, which helps them understand what to do.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Dressing and nappy changing

Remembering where clothes are kept eg outdoor coat and shoes	7/8			
Enjoying dressing up with large hat and shoes	7/8			
Helping take off coat	8			
Putting feet into own open shoes	8			
Beginning to recognise when nappy is wet/dirty	7			

Washing and bathing

Taking part in washing eg rubbing hands with soap, putting under taps to rinse	7			
Using washcloth/sponge to wash parts of body eg 'wash legs'	7/8			
Beginning to brush hair	8			
Tolerating use of toothbrush and paste	8			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern				
Anticipating and enjoying bedtime routines	7			
Beginning to take an active role in bedtime routine eg finding story book, bedtime toy or bedclothes	8			

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 4





Social and emotional development

Developmental journal · Stage 4

Children are more aware of all the familiar people in their social world – they seek their attention and call grandparents and brothers and sisters by their names. Their social world is widening and they show more interest in familiar carers, relatives and other children.

As their interest and knowledge of other people grows, they begin to be more aware that other people have feelings. This may develop later and more

slowly in a child with limited vision – possibly because they don't see subtle changes in **facial expression** in other people. At this stage your child may start recognising strong emotions like 'being cross', when they hear you say 'No!' in a loud stern voice. They'll also start to recognise the emotion of 'being pleased' when they hear you praising them in a delighted voice.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about self and parent and others				
Calling family members by name eg brothers and sisters or grandparents	9/10			
May continue to seek to be the centre of attention, eg repeating sounds, words or actions to make adults laugh	9			
Beginning to show interest in another child other than brother or sister	9			
Showing and understanding feelings				
Continuing to be possessive about own toys and defends them	9			
Understanding that carer is cross when says 'No' in cross voice	9			



This is the stage when children are often very self-directing and independent. They have their own very clear ideas about what they want to do. They may become very resistant to being guided or helped and want to do everything for themselves. Being stopped from doing something or being made to do something unwelcome can lead to great frustration and temper tantrums. This can be very difficult for you, especially if it happens in the supermarket or on the bus!

It can be helpful to understand that children can't control (regulate) their strong emotions at this stage. So once they get into a distressed state or tantrum, often nothing will calm them down until they get too tired to continue.

Children continue to show strong attachment behaviour and may become anxious when they're separated from you and left with strangers. They may be clingy in strange surroundings. Children are often more demanding of their parent's attention at this stage and find it difficult to share with another adult, their brothers or sisters (or with other children).

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Showing attachment to parent and familiar others				
Continuing to show anxiety at separation in strange surroundings	9			
Approaching parent regularly for reassurance in strange surroundings	9			
Searching out adult when distressed	10			
Finding it difficult to share parent's attention eg when parent is holding and talking to another child	10			


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Behaviour and self-regulation				
Continuing to be strongly self-directed	9/10			
Continuing to be resistant to being guided or helped	9/10			
Continuing to show frustration and anger which can become temper tantrums – especially when thwarted or not able to communicate what they want	9/10			



Children may start noticing more and joining in some of your daily activities like sweeping with a brush or wiping a table with a sponge. For children with limited vision these are most likely to be the actions that they experience directly. Children join in songs and rhyme games more and may sing along or do a short sequence of actions to nursery rhymes or songs like 'If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands...' Turn-taking is becoming better established and your child may do something with a toy then wait, while you take your turn. This often starts with rolling a ball but can be extended to other kinds of play.

Children begin to show that they recognise and anticipate the order of everyday routines, like finding their coat before getting in their buggy or

pushchair to go to the park. This predictable and regular sort of social routine is called a social script – like a script in a play. Children (like adult actors) have to learn the scripts for everyday life so they can understand and predict what they and other people are likely to do and say during everyday activities. Without this understanding, we'd all get very confused and be in a complete muddle especially when we're with other people!

Children may learn a few simple social skills, like saying 'Hello' or 'Hi' in greeting. At this stage, they usually need to be reminded (or prompted) to say this when they meet someone.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction				
Joining in actions and vocalisations in nursery rhyme game eg 'Incey wincey spider' or 'Wheels on the bus'	9/10			
Seeming to know whose turn it is and showing excitement as their turn is coming up or waiting for adult to take turn	9			
Playing contentedly alongside other children	9/10			
Beginning to imitate everyday routines with adult help eg stirring in cooking bowl, sweeping with brush	10			


Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Showing knowledge of social scripts				
Recognising and anticipating sequence of everyday routines, eg looks for coat or gets in buggy when parent is getting ready to go out	10			
Developing early social skills				
Says 'Hello' or 'Hi' in greeting when prompted	9			
Says 'Please' or 'Ta'/'Thank you' when prompted	10			



Children enjoy listening to simple stories and notice when adults make a deliberate mistake or pause when telling a favourite story. They're remembering the language of the story and using their memory to help them predict what's going to be said next.

Children continue to be **single channelled** and very engrossed in attending to their own activity. They still mainly focus on one thing at a time and can't attend to several activities at the same time. You may notice they can't listen to your directions about something else while they're playing. Children still

find it difficult to switch attention independently to a new activity of your choosing. They want to complete their own activity first and can get very upset if it's removed too early.

Children are beginning to be able to listen to an adult talking while they're doing something, as long as it relates to their own activity. Their involvement with an activity goes on longer if you assist in a supportive way (as if you're providing **scaffold**).

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Listening with interest to stories and familiar expressions that parent makes and noticing deliberate mistakes or pauses	9			
Beginning to look at pictures or feel tactile or object parts of story while listening to story	10			
Beginning to listen to repetitive stories with different voice intonations	10			
Waiting when told 'just a minute'	10			


Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Attending				
Continuing to attend strongly to a single task or activity; may need more adult persistence to attract or direct attention	9			
Attending for longer period if an adult is talking to and interacting with them	9/10			



Children are now developing a better understanding of the names of familiar objects and how they're used in everyday life and in pretend play. They can find the correct object in a familiar place when you name it. They become able to find the right object when there are a number of objects in front of them to choose from. Children are moving beyond **situational understanding** and beginning to recognise simple instructions, object names, and questions outside their familiar setting and without action prompts. This tells you that your child really understands words rather than the clues that sometimes go with words.

Children can follow simple instructions and respond to 'action' words like 'sit down', 'stand up', 'stop doing that'.

They're building more complex understanding of how objects are used and practice this in **pretend play**. They use everyday actions and objects with other people. There are longer **sequences** of play. Dolls can be introduced and children learn that they represent a real baby. This understanding often takes

longer to develop in children with limited vision than other children who can easily see that a doll looks like a child.

As play becomes more **symbolic**, children start to use objects or actions to represent real-life objects and actions – for example, an empty cup will have pretend 'juice' in it, which can be 'drunk' with pretend drinking noises. **Pretend games** are an important foundation for language development since they involve the early use of symbols to represent objects and actions. They pave the way for using words as symbols.

By the end of this stage, children are ready to join in real life activities like simple household tasks. These provide many opportunities for them to listen to, talk about and share tasks and at the same time, to attend to the detail of what's happening.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Recognising what objects are for				
Imitating everyday actions in pretend play with large doll – brushes doll's hair, feeds doll	9/10			
Repeating some pretend actions to more than one person eg 'gives mum and grandma tea' to drink from an empty cup	10			



Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding words				
Enjoying familiar stories read to them eg has favourite stories and characters	9			
Choosing a familiar everyday object when named eg picks up a cup from a group of objects	9/10			
Understanding familiar action words eg 'sit down', 'come here' and 'stop that', 'walk', 'dance'	9			
Understanding simple requests with the words alone eg 'fetch your shoes'	9			
Beginning to follow simple requests to find something in another room	10			



Sharing interest in toys and events is now more developed and your child will be able to let you know what they're interested in and when they want you to play or need your help. Children with some vision learn to use their vision to let you know what they're interested in, but you may need to be quite close for them to know you're following their look or gaze. They may also point to things of interest that are very nearby.

Children with very limited vision will start to show you objects of interest and bring them to you. It's difficult for them to draw your attention to more distant things such as an unusual noise outside the window before they have the

language to talk about it. Going still and listening intently continues to be one of the ways that you can pick up what your child is attending to, but at this stage, they may start to be able to talk to you about things that are farther away.

Children are also now more able to let you know about their needs and wishes, either with newly developing words or through actions and **gestures**.

Children are learning to take part in conversations by listening and recognising when it's their turn to speak. They may begin to comment on things other people have said, or simply repeat parts of what they have heard.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joint attention				
Sharing interest in toy with adult eg bringing, showing or pointing at a toy	9			
Handing a toy to an adult for assistance eg when unable to get it to work and sees adult as someone who can help	9			
Showing awareness of being watched – looking at object and then back to adult when adult is very close by	9			
Beginning to draw adult's attention to something in the distance	9			


Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Communicating needs				
Beginning to make needs known clearly through words eg asks for biscuit, juice	9			
Expressing intentions in words or gestures – eg wanting to go in the garden or choosing which game they would like to play	10			
Making conversation				
Beginning to make two-way conversation using speech eg listening to parent's comment and then responding	9			



Language development at this stage is very variable for all children but especially for children with limited vision. Some children will be developing quite a large vocabulary by now. Others, especially those with more limited vision may be using only a small number of words. Much of what children say is still likely to be difficult for people who don't know them to understand.

Copying what adults say is one way of practicing and improving sound (phonological) skills. It's important that you help your child to link words that are repeated to real meaning, either by linking what they've said to a real experience or responding more to your child's words or phrases when they're about real things and events in the 'here and now'.

Once children have acquired a word, they may use it in their own way. For example, they may use 'juice' to mean all drinks. This is called over generalisation and it's a normal part of learning. Usually it's adult feedback

that helps children learn to use the words correctly. You may say 'Brush, yes, it's a toothbrush'. Children with limited vision may not see the details of different brushes and will take time to learn about these distinctions. They need the opportunity to feel and experience them. They may also 'under generalise' because they can't see the basic features that are part of all objects of the same category – for example, a child may believe that only brushes with soft bristles are brushes... ie when they're like their own brush.

Your child may begin to vary their intonation patterns to express communication intention more clearly. For example, they may say 'biscuit' in a particular tone to make a request, or 'biscuit' to name the biscuit lying on the table, or 'biscuit?' with a questioning intonation to ask if the rough flat thing on the floor is a biscuit. You can help by listening out for these communication attempts and interpreting and replying to them appropriately.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
First words				
Copying words that are overheard	9			
Using a small growing vocabulary of single words to comment, name or request	9			
Using short phrases 'go home' 'get down'	9			
Singing short songs or nursery rhymes	9			


Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Naming objects				
Naming familiar objects eg cup, spoon, shoe	9			
Beginning to name unfamiliar objects of a familiar category	10			
Linking words to meaning				
Using a phrase or word to make a request eg biscuit (request intonation)	10			
Beginning to use words and expressions to comment about what is happening now eg 'daddy work', 'go out' 'sit down'	10			
Beginning to use words to answer questions eg 'where's dolly?' 'bed'	10			



Children become more able to use a more systematic approach to search for something near them. Children with limited vision begin to use a basic search strategy, such as moving their hand back and forth across the table or floor surface. Their **memory** span is increasing and they're more able to find their toys if they're stored in the usual location.

They quickly learn how to operate a new toy that has a clear cause and effect. They can post one shape into a posting toy or put one inset piece into a form board. The earliest shapes they can manage are usually circles. They begin to relate three objects to one another – for example, getting the lid off a container to find a small object inside. They begin to learn about emptying a jug or

bucket, especially with water in the bath or taking a number of bricks out of a bucket. These are the very first steps in learning about quantity and volume.

Children enjoy pulling connecting bricks apart and putting them back together and are beginning to build or stack (although a child with limited vision may need your help to find this an interesting task). They now have a strong and growing sense of the order in which things are done. This is an important part of a young child's learning – it helps them to recall and organise the **sequence** of an activity and underlies knowing how to put things into groups or categories. Your child will start to match familiar objects or toys together and can identify them as being the same kind of thing.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about objects				
Object permanence				
Searching across surface until an object is found eg (V1,2) moving hand back and forth or (V3,4) looking	9			
Going to find a particular toy to play with from a known place	9			
Cause and effect				
Performing a more complex action to get an effect eg turning a handle of a music box to get the music, or turning the handle of a 'jack in the box' until 'jack' pops out	9			



Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding how objects relate				
Learning about emptying – taking a number of bricks out of a bucket	9			
– tipping liquid or small objects out of a jug	10			
Beginning to stack one toy on another	9			
Knowing how to fit two shapes together eg posting one shape into a posting box or replacing simple shape (eg circle or square) in a formboard puzzle	9/10			
Playing constructively with three objects together eg getting a small object out of a container with lid	10			
Beginning to match two objects that are of the same category eg shoes, spoons, brushes	10			



Hand skills and the coordinated use of individual fingers continue to develop. Children with very limited vision can more easily recognise what an object is through touching it. Tactile or touching skills are becoming more systematic and objects are carefully explored by finger tips. The **pincer grip** is now well coordinated and it's precise enough to pick up small items, like a raisin.

Children are able to manipulate two objects together – for example, banging a stick on a peg, and they can use more precise finger movements to manipulate small objects or the individual keys of a keyboard.

They can use a rotating movement to try to get posting shapes into the correct hole in a posting toy although they often don't fully succeed without some adult support at this stage.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning with touch				
Identifying some familiar objects by touch (V1,2) eg demonstrating use or naming	9/10			
Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects				
Using thumb and first finger tip to pick up a small object (delicate pincer grip) eg small piece of food off a table	9			
Beginning to use a rotating movement to turn knobs and remove screw lid or shape	9/10			
Using finger tips of both hands to do an activity eg removing wrapping from a parcel or turning pages of cardboard book one at a time	10			
Using some single finger movements (one or two fingers) to play with toys, eg poking keys of keyboard	10			



Movement and mobility

Developmental journal · Stage 4

There is a wide variation in 'athletic' ability at this stage, but many children are now using walking as their preferred way of getting around. As children become more independent, they improve their balance and speed. They can walk while holding a toy and start to run when holding someone's hand or (sometimes) in a familiar open space.

Navigating around obstacles and people in motion is difficult for a child with limited vision. If they can't recognise landmarks using vision alone, they need

to learn about them using their other senses. Children gradually learn their way around all parts of their home. Some children will be getting to know their way around playground equipment in the park or garden, although more confident ones will need help when they over reach themselves.

Jumping, throwing, catching and kicking skills may all now be attempted and children can usually now climb up steps with one foot on each step.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space				
Recognising different rooms in house according to sounds, smell, relative location position or visual information	9			
Using sound clues to aid navigation eg voice of parent in adjoining room	9			
Finding way around rooms in own home independently	9			
Showing awareness of spatial boundaries ie walls in familiar environment	9/10			
Beginning to show understanding of simple positional words eg 'in', 'on', 'under'	9/10			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Exploring the environment – orientation

Finding the door of a room	9/10			
Showing understanding of the use of furniture eg finding and getting into a chair to sit	9			
Exploring new environment with support eg friend’s sitting room	9			
Stopping or slowing down when approaching obstacle in familiar environment	10			
Travelling around or over obstacles encountered	10			

Extending movement and co-ordination

Walking				
Using walking as the preferred form of mobility	9			
Walking independently with feet closer together and with good balance	9			
Walking while holding a toy eg pulling a pull along toy	9			
Squatting to pick from floor, uses hands or support to return to standing	9/10			
Taking a step or two backwards	10			
Beginning to walk cautiously on uneven ground	10			



Movement and mobility *continued*

Developmental journal · Stage 4

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Extending movement and co-ordination				
Walking				
Changing direction while walking eg as approaches person or obstacle	10			
Walking fast and beginning to run	10			
Managing stairs				
Going up stairs or steps without assistance – any method	10			
Movement in play				
Jumping with two feet on the spot eg bouncing on the bed or safe bouncy surface when hands held	9/10			
Riding on car or bike that is pushed along by child's feet	9/10			



Towards independent self-care

Children have improved co-ordination at this stage and may be beginning to manage a wider range of eating utensils, if these are used in their home. Eating can continue to be quite messy for some time as children may continue to spill food from their spoon when feeding themselves.

Some children want to do everything for themselves and become frustrated when they can't. Undressing skills will be progressing well and some children will be attempting to put simple garments on as well. Lots of experience is needed in unfastening zips and press-studs at this stage.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Searching for food eg biscuit jar, yoghurts in fridge	9			
Choosing/requesting favourite foods	9			
Participating in feeding				
Attempting to stab food with fork	9			
Eating individual pieces of food from tub or box with lid eg raisins, cereals etc	9			
Beginning to use a straw to drink	9/10			
Using spoon with some spillage	9/10			
Trying out and accepting new textures and tastes – chews small pieces of firmer textured food				
Pouring and using a utensil in play eg cup, bucket, spoon	10			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Dressing				
Removing coat or simple garment when unfastened	9			
Pulling trousers down with assistance	9/10			
Opening some fasteners eg zips, velcro, press-studs (snap fastener)	9/10			
Pulling down part-closed zipper	9/10			



Many children are becoming increasingly aware of discomfort when their nappy is wet or dirty and may be starting to know about the toilet or potty. Toilet use often emerges later in children with limited vision, possibly because they don't have the incentive of seeing other children using the potty.

Some children are agile enough to climb out of their cots and may be ready to start sleeping in a bed. Planning for safety should be considered well in advance in preparation for moving your child from a cot to bed.

Co-ordinating movement is more challenging when vision is restricted, so children with limited vision may need a lot more time to learn all these early self care skills than other children do. Praise for achieving small steps is important. You can help by giving careful support and help to prevent frustration from failure and to help your child experience the pleasure of success.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Using the toilet

Demonstrating awareness when nappy is wet/dirty	9			
Tolerating sitting on potty or toilet	10			
Using potty or toilet occasionally	10			

Washing and bathing

Helping to wash body when in bath	9			
Washing hair with support	10			
Helping to dry self after hand washing or bathing	9			
Beginning to turn cold tap on hand basin on and off	9/10			
Co-operating when cleaning teeth	9/10			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern				
Seeking bedtime toy or book	9			
Sleeping in own bed	9/10			
Continuing to sleep consistently through the night – up to 10 to 12 hours	10			

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal

for babies and children
with visual impairment

Stage 5





Social and emotional development

Interest and awareness of other people is growing steadily. This learning may need to be carefully supported and guided by parents and adults because children with limited vision are often less aware of others in the early years. They don't see (or don't see clearly) the behaviour and intentions of other people.

Learning in this area can be facilitated by encouraging children to do things with other people – for example sharing food with their parent or another child. They should be positively encouraged to join in routine family activities, like tidying up toys in the toy box with their brothers and sisters.

This is the stage when you can help your child start learning about other members of the family through language. This includes learning about their possessions – for example, 'Daddy's shoes', 'Aunty's dog', 'Ali's bike'. Other people's feelings and emotions can be talked about as well as your child's own experiences and feelings. It helps to say things like 'You're cross', 'Baby's sad', 'Felix is tired'.

Children can also be helped to understand how what they do affects others – for example, cuddling or comforting the baby makes them feel happier, pushing another child makes that child feel sad.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about self and parent and others				
Beginning to share food eg bag of crisps, when prompted by adult	11			
Referring to self by name or 'I'	11			
Enjoying dressing up, eg putting on hats, daddy's shoes	11			
Beginning to know that people have possessions eg 'daddy's shoes', 'mummy's keys', 'brother's toy'	11			
Beginning to talk about the behaviour and intentions of others	11			


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Showing and understanding feelings				
Beginning to understand their actions affect others eg may cuddle or comfort child (with adult prompting) if they know that they have upset them	11			
Beginning to use 'mental state' words to communicate about feelings eg 'happy', 'sad', 'cross', 'hurt'	11			
Enjoying being praised	11			



It's quite a big step forwards when a child becomes accepting of parents or adults joining or guiding them again. This is especially true for children who have gone through a period of being very self-directed. Understanding and using language more is one of the factors that helps with this.

Children may now be able to say what they want to do – and what they want others to do. You can use basic language to help your child develop more control over their behaviour and emotions. Frustration is easier to handle if a child understands that stopping play with their favourite game to put on their coat is because 'We're going to the park'. The earliest negotiations begin now – for example, 'Wait a minute – I'm putting washing in the machine – then we'll have story time'.

Tantrums usually become less often or intense by this stage. If it doesn't seem to be getting any better or they're getting worse, look at the Getting Stuck? booklet for further advice.

Children may accept separation from their parent more easily now if the preparation steps have been gone through initially. This tends to coincide with a more 'secure' concept of the parent as someone who goes away and returns later. Children are developing wider emotional relationships with other significant people in their life including other caregivers – a nursery key worker, brothers and sisters and other, familiar children.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Showing attachment to parent and familiar others				
Continuing to need reassurance and staged separation to settle into new environment	11			
Developing a secure relationship with another caregiver eg familiar nursery key worker, childminder	11			
Beginning to show affection and concern for other children and younger brothers and sisters when prompted	11			


Developing relationships

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Behaviour and self regulation				
Becoming more able to express their wishes and intentions through language eg 'nowant bath' 'nogo bed'	11			
Becoming more amenable to adult participation and direction	11			
Becoming more compliant with adult requests and amenable to family rules (fewer tantrums)	11			



Joint play and social interaction is becoming more extended and involved. By now children can enjoy sharing a book with their parent or carer or listening to a short story if the book has tactile feely pieces or large bright pictures. Joint games and activities begin to involve more objects – for example, cooking activities, pretend game and posting games.

This is the time to encourage your child to imitate your actions more. This takes some support, because a child with limited vision isn't helped by incidental learning from watching what adults do. You can introduce your child to new actions or unfamiliar behaviours through language and [shared discovery](#).

Older brothers and sisters and other children can help as well, by drawing a child into games of play fighting, rough and tumble, running and chasing or hiding. Fun that's shared brings shrieks of excited laughter. Your child may also now be content to play near other children when playing with toys, but at this stage it usually continues as separate, [parallel play](#) – though there may be some talking aloud.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joining in social interaction				
Sharing book with an adult and making comments about it	11			
Engaging in more extended joint play with parent involving turn taking and objects	11			
Imitating a new action or unfamiliar behaviour introduced during play or everyday routine	11			
Engaging in simple interactive play (eg rough and tumble, running and chasing, singing) with familiar child eg sibling	11			
Playing alongside other children	11			
Talking aloud when playing with others	11			



Social and emotional development *continued*

Developmental journal · Stage 5

Children at this stage are continuing to learn the **social scripts** for daily home routines and tasks. They're more interested in everything that you do together at home (or outside) so introduce them to how you do things – whether it's pouring cereal into the bowl at breakfast, cleaning the floor or putting washing into the washing machine. Show your child how they can join in and encourage them to help you. This is also a good time to demonstrate that tasks have an organised **sequence** – first we find the bowl and spoon, then pour in the cereal and then pour in the milk.

As knowledge of scripts and social expectations grows, your child will become more cooperative (when they're in the mood!) and also begin to remember simple social skills, like saying 'Bye' when someone leaves or 'Please' when they want a biscuit or juice.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Social interaction

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Actively helping adult in every day tasks eg dusting and sweeping, tidying up	11			
Performing a sequence of everyday routine eg pouring cereal bag into bowl for breakfast, squeezing toothpaste onto toothbrush	11			
Developing early social skills				
May say 'Hi/Hello', 'Bye', 'Please' or 'Thank you/Ta' unprompted	11			
Understanding has to say 'Please' before being given object	11			



Children at this stage **attend** to comments about what they're doing and are interested in. They have extended their listening skills and spend a lot more time listening to other people's conversations. It's surprising how much they can recall afterwards! However, at other times don't be surprised if they're too busy playing to pay attention to what you're saying.

Children enjoy having familiar books read to them again and again. They're now able to follow very short stories containing two or three main events and enjoy having a parent act out the different characters in a story using different voices.

As their **memory** develops, they're able to draw on organised learned information and apply it to what they think and say. Children may, for example, correct parents or carers if they mention animals in a story in the

wrong order. In relation to hearing and listening, this is called 'auditory sequencing' and children use it when retelling stories and rhymes, or when remembering the order that we ask them to do things in. This is an important developing skill that they'll use later in their learning at school as well as at home. You can support it by telling and re-telling stories with your child, explaining how to do things or by doing things in a particular order, such as baking a cake or bathing a baby doll and talking about it as you do it.

Children continue to be strongly focused on their own interests but they're becoming more flexible about shifting attention – for example, they may stop their activity to listen to you and follow your direction if you have gained their attention first.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Noticing a deliberate mistake in story telling or a rhyme	11			
Remembering phrases from stories and rhymes and uses them appropriately	11			
Recognising the tunes of familiar songs and rhymes and joins in eg 'Happy birthday' and 'Baa baa black sheep'	11			
Waiting for a little longer when told – 'just a minute'	11			


Listening and attending

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Listening				
Listening carefully to the other speakers before joining in with conversation	11			
Attending				
Continuing to be strongly focused on their own interests but more flexible in shifting attention eg may stop activity to listen to you	11			
Accepting direction more easily when attention is not so intently focused	11			



Children understand more complex instructions with two and sometimes three information-carrying parts by the end of this stage. They listen carefully to what people are saying and can answer some simple questions.

They're beginning to understand the use of pronouns (I, me, you) but it may take them longer than other children to grasp that 'me' and 'you' reverse depending on who is the speaker and the listener. Limited vision may make this 'perspective taking' more difficult to understand and you may need to do a lot of modelling of this.

Children with limited vision also need greater help in understanding prepositions, like 'under', 'on top of', 'behind', and you may need to give them plenty of active opportunity to understand different spatial positions and relationships.

Pretend play is becoming more elaborate and children may practice longer sequences of everyday activities in their play. This may need quite a bit of help from adults. You can help by setting up a short pretend game using everyday replica objects, like pretending to have a tea party or bathing a baby doll. Children can be encouraged to plan and organise what objects they'll need for the pretend game. By the end of this stage children may be starting to use one object to represent another in their sequences – for example, pretending a rod is a toothbrush or a potato chip.

By the end of this stage children like to join in simple real life activities like washing up, making sandwiches, helping to mend things and so on. These all provide many opportunities for them to listen, to talk about and share tasks and attend to the detail of what is happening.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding words				
Selecting a number of objects from a small group when named	11			
Following an instruction with two information carrying words, eg 'Get your shoes and your coat'	11			
Answering simple questions such as 'Where's the...?' 'What is it?'	11			
Beginning to understand 'under', 'on top', 'behind'	11			



Understanding language and meaning

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Understanding words				
Understanding some descriptions such as wet, cold, dirty	11			
Beginning to understand some pronouns eg I, me, you	11			

Pretend play

Making a pretend sequence eg pouring tea and then drinking, washing then drying doll	11			
Gathering together toys they wish to play with eg getting a doll and tea set, before they start to play tea-parties	11			
Using one object to represent another in pretend play eg uses a lid as a cup, puts brick on a plate as if it is food	11			
Enjoying dressing up eg as real person in their life or story character	11			



At this stage of development, children begin to use their growing language skills to draw your attention to more distant events, by referring to the rain on the windowpane or to the ice cream van outside. They also draw your attention to objects nearby. They're becoming more interested in what you're doing and may ask you about it. They're now able to use language to let you know about their everyday needs.

They take part in simple conversation, taking turns to comment or answer your questions. Children may use **intonation** (of their voice) and/or **facial expression** to make their meaning clearer – for example, to ask a question – 'Nanna gone?' rather than just to make a comment like 'Nanna gone'.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Joint attention				
Sharing interest in distant event through speech eg sound of fire engine, bird song, cat meow	11			
Drawing parent's attention to specific object through language and gestures	11			
Beginning to show increased interest in the adult's focus of attention eg 'What doing?', 'What's that?'	11			
Beginning to understand simple phrases of 'joint attending'	11			
Communicating needs				
Beginning to communicate needs through language eg 'want biscuit'	11			


Communication

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
<i>Making conversation</i>				
Beginning to make a two way conversation taking three turns eg Child says 'drink', parent says 'Do you want juice?' and child says 'juice'	11			
Beginning to use appropriate intonation to make a request, ask a question or make a comment	11			



Vocabulary is now increasing steadily in many children although children with the most limited vision may develop more slowly. As vocabulary increases, children begin to join single words together to produce word combinations and short sentences. These usually start as two word combinations with a noun and a noun or a noun and a verb, eg 'mummy hat', or 'doggie gone'. Children may start to use their own name saying things like 'Sherri do'.

During this stage children begin to produce longer, three word sentences and start to experiment with grammar. Initial phrases may be learned as a single unit eg 'wanna juice', 'allgone now'. Then the child starts to spontaneously put two or more words together. Some of the structures or grammar will be correct, but usually parts of grammar are missing or are used incorrectly eg 'baby sit down – table'. This is a normal part of early language development.

Children need time to work out the complex rules of grammar for themselves through using language to talk about their experiences and talking to adult partners who can model appropriate grammatical sequences by 'recasting'. The grammar usually becomes more correct as sentence length increases.

Children now use their language in their play and can practise their developing language skills when they're alone. They're interested in the world around them and may start to ask 'What?' questions.

By the end of this stage some children will have a large vocabulary and be producing simple sentences. They're able to hold a simple conversation and chat to family members. Their sentences are much clearer and they can usually be understood by people who don't know them well.

However, some children, especially those with the most limited vision, may be somewhat repetitive, repeating back what's said to them or saying the same thing frequently. They may also talk about things that aren't relevant to what's going on at the time. They may need extra help to learn how to make their talk more spontaneous, meaningful and relevant. See the section on repetitive speech and echolalia in the Getting Stuck? booklet for more ideas.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
First words and naming objects				
Referring to self by name	11			
Naming a variety of everyday objects	11			
Beginning to make little sentences by joining two words together eg 'daddy gone'	11			


Expressive language – talking

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
First words and naming objects				
Naming a variety of everyday objects	11			
Expanding vocabulary eg using 50 words or more	11			
Regularly using two word combinations eg to request 'biscuit please' or to comment on activity eg 'eat biscuit'	11			
Using words other than nouns eg verbs – gone, come	11			
Beginning to ask questions eg whassat?	11			
Beginning to use sentences of three or more words	11			
Beginning to use pronouns (me, you, I)	11			
Beginning to use prepositions (on, in, under)	11			
Controlling voice volume eg whispers or uses loud voice	11			
Using appropriate intonation to get across different communicative meanings	11			



Play and learning

Children are now ready to sit at a small table and concentrate on play with one or two toys for a short, sustained time. They may be able to concentrate for longer if an adult gives gentle support and guidance as [scaffold](#). At this stage children will have favourite toys that they return to again and again, on which they try out lots of different activities.

Their sense of curiosity leads children to investigate things. This experimenting is an important part of learning as a 'little scientist'.

Children can relate three objects together, such as replacing a toy in a container and then putting on its lid. They can manipulate a number of objects at once eg several containers and getting correct lids on.

Now is the time to introduce your child to building games and children develop an interest in construction toys that are large and easy to fit together, like large connecting building blocks.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Preparing for pre-school learning				
Being able to sit at small table and concentrate on independent task for a few minutes	11			
Being able to sit at small table and engage in adult led activity for 5 – 10 minutes	11			



Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning about objects				
Object permanence				
During play searching for a toy which has moved some distance away	11			
Finding fixed objects in the home or familiar environment eg knows where the fridge is or where the books are kept	11			
Beginning a more systematic search across objects in a line on table	11			
Cause effect	11			
Performing a two part sequence to get an effect	11			
Understanding how objects relate	11			
Relating three objects eg replacing a toy in a container and replacing the lid	11			
Understanding that lids fit in different ways eg taking lid off and on screw – capped bottle	11			
Stacking several objects on each other	11			
Knowing that objects can be built of several parts eg playing with construction toys like duplo or megablocks	11			



Children are now beginning to recognize simple size and shape differences, such as big and small or round or square. You can help by introducing these differences so that your child can experience them by touch.

Children are also ready to learn about early differences in quantity – with concepts such as ‘empty’, ‘full up’, ‘lots inside’.

Your child will be adding to their knowledge of shapes, sizes and textures and colours. If they have sufficient vision, they may be able to match objects that are the ‘same’, and maybe match objects to pictures and pictures to pictures.

Once the idea of contrast has been learned, they’re ready to begin to sort and categorise according to concepts. They can learn about comparisons and contrasts like ‘wet’ and ‘dry’, ‘soft’ and ‘scratchy’ or ‘rough’, ‘hot’ and ‘cold’. They can sort objects according to everyday categories – all the shoes together, all the spoons together. You can help them by sorting objects according to shape, size, texture or colour with them.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys	
Understanding size – large and small					
Identifying large and small everyday objects eg big shoe/little shoe, big spoon/little spoon	11				
Understanding how different sized objects fit together eg different size (round shape) in two piece form board/puzzle	11				
Understanding shape – round and square					
Identifying round and square objects eg round ball and square cube	11				
Early understanding of quantity					
Identifying early difference in contents of container – ‘empty’, ‘full up’	11				



Making connections

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Early sorting and categorizing				
Matching objects that are the same shape, size or colour	11			
Beginning to match object to picture <i>Check Record of developing vision</i>	11			
Matching two pictures that are the same	11			
Beginning to sort everyday objects according to one characteristic eg all spoons together/all brushes together	11			
Beginning to sort objects according to two characteristics eg separating shoes from brushes (real objects), big and small, round and square, yellow and red	11			



Children’s hand skills continue to develop and they’re getting better at opening and closing containers and handling quite small objects. They learn to use their hands for screwing and unscrewing. They can now identify more objects by touch and match objects by texture or shape.

Children with more vision like to make marks on paper with pencils, crayons, chalks and paints. Children with more limited vision may also enjoy the experience of using fingers or markers and then feeling the result afterwards to make the task more motivating.

Children with better vision may be able to copy simple shapes such as straight lines and circular scribble and may begin to hold a pencil with thumb and fingers (tripod). Children with limited vision also enjoy drawing shapes in clay or with finger paints. They’ll develop more delicate hand co-ordination such as simple threading, although these tasks are much more difficult for them than for others and these skills usually take longer to develop.

Plenty of opportunity for functional play with the kind of toy material suggested at Stage 5 will assist development of hand skills, coordination and strength.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Learning with touch				
Identifying a greater range of familiar objects by touch	11			
Beginning to extend or generalise recognition of unfamiliar objects	11			
Matching differing textures by touch eg furry, smooth, prickly	11			
Identifying different textures by touch eg hard/soft, smooth/rough, warm/cold,	11			
Differentiating simple shapes by touch or touch/vision eg round ball/square brick	11			
Beginning to enjoy ‘messy’ play	11			



Using hands

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects				
Opening snack tub with simple tight fitting lid eg crisp tub or sweet tube	11			
Taking a small lid off a screw top jar to get a sweet or snack	11			
Using two hands together to assemble toys eg preschool construction toy or toy train driver in his cab	11			
Using more precise placement to fit object in a hole eg large pegs in a pegboard, threading large beads onto stick or rigid lace	11			
Scribbling with crayon or in clay or dough	11			
Developing control of a marker (pencil, crayon or marker)	11			
Imitating circular scribbles or imitating vertical and horizontal strokes on paper or in dough or clay	11			



Movement and mobility

Now that walking skills are well developed, children with limited vision begin to extend their movement skills to bending, jumping, climbing, kicking etc although they may need repeated physical guidance and lots of practice to get them going. They're ready to learn skills such as pedalling a tricycle once the movements required are physically demonstrated to them. They use all their senses to understand what's happening around them and may be

cautious in new environments. Many will be very careful about running around with other children or in busy places, but some show no fear – although some children are beginning to be aware of hazards in the environment, many children with limited vision are not aware of them at this stage. Extra care is therefore needed to ensure that if your child is active, they don't over reach themselves and do something dangerous.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space				
Moving body in rhythm of motion in swing	11			
Beginning to know left and right hand	11			
Exploring the environment – orientation				
Fetching item from familiar location eg biscuit from cupboard	11			
Exploring new environments with less direct support (eg pre-school or nursery)	11			
Extending movement and co-ordination				
Walking and running				
Bending to pick up objects from floor and returning to standing without support	11			
Running with hand held	11			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Extending movement and co-ordination				
<i>Walking and running</i>				
Running co-ordinating arm and leg movements	11			
Walking more confidently over different surfaces eg uneven ground	11			
Beginning to walk backwards	11			
Stopping and starting abruptly while maintaining balance when running	11			
Changing direction to avoid obstacles while running <i>Check Record of developing vision</i>	11			
Walking on tiptoe	11			
<i>Managing stairs</i>				
Going downstairs (any method) without adult help	11			
Going downstairs looking forward holding hand	11			
Walking up stairs alternating feet holding rail	11			
Walking down stairs alternating feet holding rail	11			
Standing on one foot momentarily	11			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Extending movement and co-ordination				
<i>Movement in play</i>				
Jumping from low object with both feet together (single step) hand held	11			
Jumping from low object with both feet together (single step) without holding hand	11			
Climbing up and down on furniture	11			
Climbing up ladders on play equipment	11			
Sliding down toddler slide	11			
Standing kicking a ball	11			
Pedalling toddler bike	11			



Towards independent self-care

Developmental journal · Stage 5

With practice children with limited vision will continue to improve their physical self-care skills and be ready to play a greater part in eating, dressing and bathing.

During this stage children learn new self-care skills and become more independent. They're interested in a wider range of foods and can enjoy being involved in simple food/mealtime preparation like putting banana pieces in yoghurt, spreading jam on toast, putting bowls and cutlery on

the table. They're ready to learn about pouring liquids from a jug into a container though this will be rather messy at this stage.

At home they may be less aware of household tasks such as food preparation, washing and cleaning than other children, but can be encouraged to learn more through participation and play.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Feeding/eating				
Beginning to join in setting the table for family meals	11			
Carrying bowl, cup, plate or cutlery with help	11			
Drinking from an open topped cup with support	11			
Pouring liquid from jug into container with some spillage	11			
Eating with spoon with minimal spillage	11			
Using spoon to transfer food from one container to another	11			
Getting food from screw top jar	11			
Attempting to use a knife for spreading	11			
Attempting to use a knife for cutting (eg dough or cake)	11			
Carrying bowl/plate with sandwich for a few steps without dropping	11			



Children who are beginning to attend playgroups or pre-schools may need to be taught a range of specific strategies to make it possible for them to manage self-care tasks with greater independence in these settings. These might include how to find their coat hook at playgroup and how to find the table and chair for snack time.

They may also be expected to take an increasing role in washing and drying their hands and beginning to help to put on and take off outdoor clothing.

At home the stage at which families expect children to use the toilet or potty depends on family preferences. Daytime naps have usually become shorter and generally now take place in the afternoon only.

Children with limited vision need more time, patience and experience to master these skills.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
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Dressing

Putting arms in open-fronted coat or shirt when held	11			
Pulling pants/trousers up and down	11			
Opening different kinds of fasteners eg large buttons, snap belts	11			
Pulling up part closed zipper	11			
Pulling on socks	11			
Hanging up coat	11			
Finding items of clothing in bedroom	11			

Using the toilet

Aware of need to empty bladder or bowel	11			
Communicating when about/need to empty bladder or bowel	11			



Developmental goal	Card	Possibly	Definitely	What my child does and enjoys
Using the toilet				
Pulling down elasticized trousers independently	11			
Using potty/toilet regularly with support	11			
Becoming dry/clean during the day	11			
Flushing toilet with support	11			
Waiting to be wiped after using potty/nappy	11			
Wiping self with support	11			
Starting to ask to use the toilet when needed	11			
Washing and bathing				
Turning taps off and on	11			
Washing and drying hands with minimal assistance	11			
Using a tooth brush with support	11			
Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern				
Sleeping predominantly at night with decreasing need for day time naps	11			
Sleeping in own bed through the night (10 to 12 hours)	11			

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Child's name: _____

Date of birth: _____



Developmental profile

Social and emotional development	Stage 1a	Stage 1b	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Developing relationships						
Social interaction						
Communication, language and meaning						
Listening and attending						
Understanding language and meaning						
Communication						
Expressive language – talking						
Play and learning						
Making connections						
Using hands						
Movement and mobility						
Body awareness						
Exploring the environment						
Extending movement and co-ordination						
Towards independent self-care						
Feeding/eating						
Dressing and nappy changing						
Using the toilet						
Washing and bathing						
Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern						

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal

for babies and children
with visual impairment

Record of developing vision



Some definitions

Visual lures or **targets** are the objects used to attract your baby's visual attention and interest and to encourage them to look more closely or shift their gaze. These could be faces, people, everyday objects, toys, lights etc.

Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity

- **Visual awareness** – alerting to/detecting the presence of a visual stimulus.
- **Visual interest** – looking at a visual lure to learn about it.
- **Visual acuity** is a *measure* of how well a child sees detail of standard black and white materials at different distances, eg letter charts and acuity cards (stripes) used by eye specialists.

Functional vision and visual function

- **Functional vision** is a measure of how well a child sees the visual **lures** important for their current developmental needs and of their level of control of eye movements and gaze at various distances. The **Record of developing vision** measures your baby's functional vision and is the basis of the activities on the **Developing vision activity cards** – the activities that make up your child's individual programme to promote development of vision.
- **Visual function** is how a child functions visually within the everyday environment.

Eye movements

- **Directing gaze** – turning eyes to look at someone or something to which one has been alerted in near and far distance.
- **Following** – movement of the eyes as they keep a moving object in focus.
- **Tracking** – movement of the eyes as they keep an object in focus as it rolls along a surface or along a track.
- **Convergence** – inward movement of the eyes towards the nose in order to focus on very near objects.
- **Scanning** – movements of the eyes searching to find something, eg one's shoe in a room or the red flower in a complex picture.

This booklet is published as part of the Early Support *Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment*.

Development of vision – general points

Record of developing vision

- This booklet is designed to help you improve your child's vision as fast as possible as this will benefit overall development and ensure your child achieves their full potential for vision.
- Vision normally improves from birth through early childhood as babies learn to control their eye movements and to focus their gaze on near and far objects.
- The vision of children who have difficulties with seeing (visual impairment) usually develops more slowly than the vision of other children.
- In most of the eye conditions that lead to visual impairment in childhood, vision tends to improve throughout the early years. How much a baby's vision will be able to develop depends on the nature and severity of their visual problem. The potential for visual progress and actual rate of progress differ considerably from baby to baby – in some children there is quite a lot of development and it's quite fast and in others there is only very little development and it comes slowly. A very few eye conditions preclude development of vision, eg anophthalmia (where children are born without eyes). You might want to talk about this with your specialist professional.

Sometimes the development of vision in babies with visual impairment is slower than need be and children have been shown to benefit from a programme to promote vision.¹ **Active encouragement** improves the rate of visual progress in most babies.

- The [Record of developing vision](#) is made up of a series of [Record charts](#) that you can use with your specialist professional to note down your baby's visual progress. Each chart has an accompanying [Activity card](#) for you to work through.
- The [Record of developing vision](#) and suggested activities follow the steps, pattern and sequence seen in children with full sight but they cannot be linked to specific stages of the [Developmental journal](#), because the level of vision of one baby may be much better than that of another, although developmentally they are both at the same stage.
- As you progress through the [Development of vision activity cards](#), you will notice that some of the activities require your baby/child to be at a certain level of development in relation to [Play and learning](#), [Communication, language and meaning](#) or [Movement and mobility](#) so you shouldn't try to record these visual stages until your baby has these developmental skills.
- Check the [Record of developing vision](#) regularly with your specialist professional and decide together on the best visual [lures](#), speeds of movement and distances to help your child.
- Visual [lures](#) should not make a sound if they are being used to fill in the record.
- Activities that promote development of vision will be hard work for your baby or child, as this is an area that is difficult for them, so you need to use all your ingenuity to keep their interest and show pleasure in their success.

¹ Sonksen P M, Petrie A and Drew K J

Promotion of visual development of severely visually impaired babies: evaluation of a developmentally based programme
Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology **33**: 320-335 (1991)



Record 1

The early stages of visual development involve awareness and subsequent interest in looking at faces, people, diffuse light, light reflections and gently oscillating objects in the near environment. Newborn babies move their eyes to each side and up and down. Movements are often jerky and the two eyes may not move perfectly together – most cannot converge. Gradually movements become smoother, quicker and more in unison.

At the same time babies begin to learn to direct their gaze and to follow near faces, people and objects. A baby/child with visual impairment may show

their first visual response to a glowing light source in a dark room. If you find it difficult to tell what your baby/child is able to see, talk about this with someone with specialist knowledge.

Whenever lures are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from lure to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity card 1

Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Visual awareness			
Alerting (eye widening, alert expression, or change in body tone)			
Aware of overhead lights being switched on/off			
Distance: within 1/3 metre			
Aware of a glowing light in a dark room, eg 'oogly' on a pen torch			
Aware of a glowing light in a day lit room			
Aware of a smiling expressive face			
Aware of a spinning light reflecting ball, eg tinsel (12cm)			
Aware of a spinning colourful woolly pom-pom ball (12cm)			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Visual interest or looking at			
– a glowing/light-producing toy in dark room, eg 'oogly' on a pen torch			
– a glowing light in day lit room			
– a smiling expressive face			
– a spinning light reflecting balls, eg tinsel (12cm)			
– a spinning colourful woolly pom-pom ball (12cm)			
Others (describe)			
Eye movements (near distance) – directing gaze			
Detects and shifts gaze to a lure , eg towards light when you draw back the curtains or towards your face when you lean over your child			
Eye movements (near distance) – following			
Follows lure when it is moved slowly from side to side			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Eye movements (near distance) – following continued			
Follows lure when it is moved slowly up and down			
Eye movements (near distance) – convergence			
Eyes converge (look in towards nose) when lure is moved slowly towards nose			



Record 2

Record of developing vision

Visual interest and the control of **gaze** and **eye movements** for 'people' and large **lures** gradually extend to greater distances (up to three metres). Gaze shifting and **following** also expand and become smoother and quicker. Babies detecting **lures** of 12 to 25 cm begin to track them if rolled slowly across a table surface. At the same time, **visual awareness** and **interest** gradually develop for increasingly small items at table top distance (30 to 40cm).

Whenever **lures** are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from **lure** to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity cards 2a and 2b

Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Visual awareness and visual interest			
Detects/looks at large lures (12cm or over) that 'move on the spot' eg dangling spinning ball, favourite cuddly toy (jiggled) or you waving			
Detects/looks at increasingly small single, stationary items on a well-contrasted table/highchair surface			
Detects/looks at a young child's football (12cm)			
Detects/looks at a tennis ball (6cm)			
Detects/looks at a toy brick/cube (2.5cm)			
Detects/looks at a raisin or cheerio (1cm)			
Detects/looks at a hundred and thousand (HTs) – sugar cake decoration (1 to 1.2mm)			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Visual awareness and visual interest continued			
Others (describe)			
Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 3 metres			
Eye movements – directing gaze at increasing distances			
Detects and shifts gaze to large lures (you, toy more than 25cm) to each side.			
Detects and shifts gaze from one large lure (you, toy more than 25cm) to another one at the same distance			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Eye movements – following			
Following a person moving across a room at increasing distances			
Following large lures (12 to 25cm) at increasing distances when moved across visual field from R to L or L to R			
Following large lures (12 to 25cm) at increasing distances when moved up and down			
Eye movements – convergence			
Sustained and nearer to nose than before for a lure (8 to 10cm) moved slowly towards nose			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Eye movements – tracking			
Tracks a lure (25cm and 12cm) rolled from R to L and L to R across a table top			
Tracks a lure (25 and 12cm) rolled 'to' and 'fro' along a table top			



Record 3

Record of developing vision

Control of **visual awareness**, **visual interest**, gaze and eye movement for 'people' and large **lures** gradually extends even further – up to six metres. Gaze shifting and following also expand. Tracking along the floor can be recorded once a baby can sit supported on the floor, both across the visual field and 'to and fro'. At the same time, **visual awareness** and **visual interest** for increasingly small items at tabletop distance (30 to 40cm) continue to progress. Once aware and interested in large **lures** (yourself or an object of 20 to 30cm) at two metres, babies begin to detect similar-size **lures** when popped out from behind a screen or armchair with a non-patterned cover placed at a one metre distance from them. Some children with limited vision

continue to improve more and faster in near than far distance. Children need to understand the names of family, friends, pets, everyday objects and toys before you can try to complete some of the sections below.

Whenever **lures** are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from **lure** to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity cards 3a and 3b

Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres			
Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity			
Detects/looks at large lures (12cm or over) that 'move on the spot', eg you waving, a favourite cuddly toy (jiggled) or a dangling spinning ball			
Detects/looks at increasingly small single, stationary items on a well-contrasted table or highchair surface			
Detects a tennis ball size (6cm)			
Detects a wooden brick/cube (2.5cm)			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity continued			
Detects a raisin or cheerio (1cm)			
Detects/looks at a hundred and thousand (HTs) – sugar cake decoration (1 to 1.2mm)			
Looks actively or scans room, visually finds and indicates recognition by looking and smiling at, pointing to or saying ‘there’ for the following			
– a familiar person or pet when asked, eg ‘where’s daddy?’			
– a familiar object or toy when asked, eg ‘where’s teddy/your beaker?’			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Looks actively or scans room, visually finds and indicates recognition by looking and smiling at, pointing to or saying 'there' for the following continued			
– an object of a familiar type, eg beaker or brush, but different in colour from their own			
Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres			
Eye movements – directing gaze at increasing distances			
Detects and shifts gaze from one large lure (12 to 25cm) to another			
Detects and shifts gaze when large lure, eg your face or favourite cuddly toy, pops out from behind a screen/armchair – see introduction to Record 3 on page 12			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Eye movements – following at increasing distances			
Follows person moving across a room at increasing distances			
Follows large lure (12 to 25cm) when moved from side to side			
Follows large lure (12 to 25cm) when moved up and down			
Eye movements – tracking at increasing speeds and distances			
Tracks ball rolled across their visual field and towards and away from them along the floor			
Tracks a large plastic football (about 25cm)			
Tracks a small child’s football – about 12cm			
Tracks a tennis ball size – 6cm			



Record 4

Record of developing vision

Continue to use Record 3 to record near and distant awareness/interest items and eye movement items until you reach their limits in terms of size, speed and distance. There are additional spaces to record steps in scanning and tracking. This section focuses mainly on recording further development of **functional acuity** through looking for detail in people, objects, pictures and photographs.

People and objects are three-dimensional and are easier to see than pictures or photographs, which are two-dimensional. If you have a digital camera, you can take and print off photographs of family faces against a plain background. Matt photographs are easier to see than gloss. Television programmes are on the whole like constantly changing photographs and it's difficult for a child with limited vision to work out what's happening. Vision for television is not included in the record as it is difficult to be sure what aspects are seen sufficiently well for understanding. Discuss TV programmes with your specialist teacher.

Understanding the names of family/friends/pets/everyday objects/toys/items in pictures is needed before you can try to complete this section. Some parts require the child to indicate what they see by naming, making a meaningful noise, eg 'brmm – brmm' or making a **gesture**, eg 'of drinking'.

People who are **lures** should not speak and objects should be silent, until your child has indicated their choice. Objects can be on a table if near or on the floor if further away. Describe the **lure** briefly in the left-hand column, eg for a photograph, the overall size, the content and the background – 16cm by 20cm grandpa's face, kitchen wall (cream emulsion). In pictures note size of picture and item and give brief description – 8cm yellow duck on green grass with tree to left – all separate and bold with clear outlines. Record the viewing distance in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity cards 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d

Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest			
Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres			
Looking actively at people and able to distinguish between			
– two familiar people of different body shape/height or wearing clothes the child has seen them in before when asked 'Where's?'			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest			
Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres continued			
– two familiar people dressed in similar colours and of similar body shape and height etc when asked 'Where's?'			
Looking actively at objects or scanning and able to distinguish between two objects or toys that do not make a sound, when named			
– two objects of similar size but different shape and colour			
– two objects of similar size, colour and overall shape			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres continued			
– several objects in a cluster or group of objects in a basket/pile of the same type but different sizes and colours, eg family beakers/shoes in a basket, in response to 'Where are Susan's shoes?' or 'Find Susan's shoes.'			
– several objects in a cluster/group of objects in a basket/pile of the same type and colour but different in size, eg family trainers in a basket, in response to 'Where are Susan's trainers?' or 'Find Susan's trainers.'			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres continued			
Looking actively and identifying pictures – your child says, makes a meaningful noise or gestures the names of items in ‘new’ pictures – that they have not previously seen, in response to the question ‘What’s/Who’s that?’ (within 1/3 metre)			
– an item of familiar type, eg beaker or bath duck. Picture of a single item (life size) in bold colours, clear outline, plain background and good contrast to background)			
– item(s) of the same type as above but embedded in a simple scene. Items in the scene should not overlap each other and be in bold colours, clear outline, plain background and good contrast to background			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres continued			
– item(s) but smaller and embedded in coloured picture of a natural scene – like a printed photograph			
– very small items in a visually complex coloured picture of everyday scene			
Looking actively at photographs – your child says, makes a meaningful noise or gestures the names of items in ‘new’ photographs – that they have not previously seen, in response to the question ‘What’s/Who’s that?’ (within 1/3 metre)			
A photograph of a single familiar face against a plain, well-contrasted background			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest			
Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres continued			
A photograph of two familiar faces against a plain, well-contrasted background			
A photograph of a familiar person (full length) against a plain, well-contrasted background			
A photograph of two familiar people (full length) against a plain, well-contrasted background			
A photograph of a single familiar face in a natural indoor or outdoor setting			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Acuity/visual interest Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres continued			
A photograph of two familiar faces in a natural indoor or outdoor setting			
A photograph of two familiar people (full length) in a natural indoor or outdoor setting			
A photograph of two familiar people in a natural indoor or outdoor setting			
A photograph of a family occasion (birthday tea or picnic) in a natural indoor or outdoor setting			



Steps in functional vision	Possibly	Definitely	Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)
Eye movements – scanning			
Introduction to scanning along a line of objects			
Three to five familiar toys/objects in row – child follows your finger along the row in either direction in search of the requested item			
Five familiar objects in a row – child follows your finger from L to R in search of the one requested			
Eye movements – tracking			
Tracking moving objects along an irregular pathway, eg train going around a winding track or a streamer in your hand			

Early Support

Helping every child succeed

Developmental journal

for babies and children
with visual impairment



Glossary

Glossary

- **adapted hand grasp** – adjusting the opening of fingers and position of the hand to fit the object when beginning to pick it up or grasp it
- **alerting** – becoming aware and attentive to an object or event
- **anticipation** – the feeling of looking forward or expecting that something is going to happen
- **anticipation games** – short sequence games that are played so frequently that a child begins to know what to expect next in the routine, often drawn from daily activities or nursery rhymes, eg 'Peek-a-boo' or 'Round and round the garden'
- **attachment** – a bond or relationship developed between parents and carers and their child
- **attend** – paying attention to someone or something so that one might detect an auditory, visual or tactile stimuli
- **auditory sensitivity** – discomfort or distress in response to loud noises or particular sounds
- **aversive** – a strong dislike and avoidance
- **babble** – repetitive sequences of consonant-vowel syllable-like vocalisations, eg 'dadada'
- **backwards or reverse chaining** – a technique for learning, where the last step of a task is learnt first and subsequent steps are learnt in reverse order, eg step 4, 3, 2, 1
- **biological clock** – internal brain process that helps establish and maintain sleeping and waking patterns in a 24-hour cycle
- **bond** – a unique, strong relationship between a parent or main carer and a child
- **bottom shuffling** – moving around the floor on one's bottom when in a sitting up position
- **casting** – learning to let go of objects leading to throwing away game played by children
- **cause-effect** – knowledge that a certain action makes certain things happen, eg moving a hand holding a rattle and the rattle making a sound
- **child directed speech** (also known as 'child directed language', 'baby talk' or 'motherese') – the kind of speech/sounds adults make when communicating with babies and small children, eg using a higher pitch of voice; using more varied intonation and facial expression; using short, repetitive sentences; using simpler and repetitive words and phrases
- **cognitive development** – the processes involved in thinking, reasoning, learning, processing and remembering information
- **communication** – the way we tell someone what we mean using language, our voice, our face and our body
- **commando crawling** – lying prone and pulling oneself along the floor by one's arms
- **concept** – an idea or understanding associated with a person, object, event etc
- **consonant sounds** – a speech sound formed by restricting, channelling, or directing air flow with the tongue, teeth, and/or lips, eg th, s, f, g, t, p, m etc
- **construction toys** – building toys such as bricks, blocks, many/several part models, railway or road layouts
- **convergence** – inward movement of the eyes towards the nose in order to focus on very near objects
- **cruising** – moving along against a piece of furniture – lifting one foot to move sideways while holding on
- **developmental setback** – slowing down in rate of learning or 'long plateau' in one or more areas of development
- **directing gaze** – turning eyes to look at someone or something to which one has been alerted in near and far distance

Glossary continued

- **echoing or echolalia** – repetition of words or phrases said by another
- **emotions** – feelings such as happiness and anger
- **engagement** – a close, emotional form of reciprocal interaction between babies and their caregivers when the baby is interested, alert and participating in interaction
- **exploratory play** – spontaneous and repeated actions that lead to discovery
- **expressive language** – words that are combined into phrases or sentences that are used by the child
- **expressive vocabulary** – single words that are used in the production of language
- **eye contact** – when two people look into each other's eyes
- **eye-hand co-ordination** – ability to see a desired object, and then reach out for it and do something with the object in a co-ordinated (organized) way
- **eye poking** – poking or pressing the eye repeatedly with a finger as a form of self-stimulation
- **facial expression** – the changes we make to our faces by widening the eyes, opening the mouth, smiling etc
- **fading** – shifting attention to a new toy or activity before removing an existing toy or activity
- **forward chaining** – a technique for learning, where the steps are taught in sequence starting with the first step, ie step 1, 2, 3, 4
- **following** – movement of the eyes as they keep a moving object in focus
- **forewarning** – using simple physical or visual cues, sounds and words to let a child know what is about to happen
- **formboard** – simple form of wooden puzzle toy with inset pieces that can be removed from the wooden tray
- **functional vision or visual function** – a measure of how well a child sees the visual lures important for their current developmental needs and of their level of control of eye movements and of gaze at various distances
- **gesture** – motions of the hands, head or body to communicate
- **guiding hands** – putting your hand gently on your child's upper arm, elbow, lower arm or wrist to help guide them to explore and play and to develop 'joint attention'
- **hand over hand** – putting your hand gently over your child's hand (or their hand over yours) to help guide them to explore and play and to develop 'joint attention'
- **high sensitivity surfaces** – textures and materials that appear to arouse a stronger sensory reaction when touching them, eg sticky, fluffy or grainy surfaces
- **hypersensitivity or hyperawareness** – extreme sensitivity to certain sounds or textures
- **imaginative play** – where the child creates their own world or game, alone or with others, using new and familiar objects, actions and roles
- **imitation** – when children copy the actions of other people
- **incidental learning** – learning resulting from listening to or observing the actions of others
- **information carrying words** – words or phrases that communicate a main idea or bit of information to the listener. When a speaker says 'put teddy (1) in the box (2)', this can be viewed as two information carrying phrases
- **intelligible** – able to be understood
- **interact** – to be involved in communication or social activity with somebody else
- **interaction** – the behaviour which takes place between two people – for example, between a parent and a child
- **intonation** – variations in pitch patterns (melody/rhythm) and emphasis of spoken language that provide important cues for drawing attention to salient words or syllables

Glossary continued

- **jargon** – sounds made by a child that have similar characteristics to spoken language, but that are not understood by other people
- **joint attention or referencing** – where two people both share a focus of attention to the same object or event or topic of conversation
- **light band** – stick-like toy with a battery or fluorescent light that shines
- **lure** – an object used to attract visual attention or interest
- **memory** – the ability of the brain to store past knowledge of sounds, words, language, people and events etc
- **midline** – the middle of the body, as if a vertical line is running from top of the head down to the feet
- **mirroring** – copying or elaborating and tuning in to another person's actions, the sounds they make and their feelings
- **modelling** – providing an example for others to copy
- **mobile** –
 - (a) a toy with objects/parts attached on string/elastic or similar to a frame and suspended above a cot etc
 - (b) able to move around
- **mobility** – the ability to make planned movements through the environment
- **mobility officer** – a professional trained to teach individuals how to move within the environment in a safe and planned manner
- **motor skills** –
 - gross motor skills** – ability to use the body to move around, first by turning, then crawling or rolling, then walking and so on
 - fine motor skills** – ability to use the body for small, more precise movements, particularly hand movements
- **mouththing** – exploration of objects using the mouth
- **non-speech sounds** – any vocal sounds that are not speech sounds such as humming, musical sounds or making animal noises
- **navigate** – to find your way around
- **non-visual characteristics** – features of objects, people, places etc perceived through touch, sound, taste, smell etc
- **noun** – naming words for objects, places, people etc, eg 'bag', 'Mummy', 'banana'
- **objects of reference** – use of an object to link with (or represent) a familiar routine or activity – eg a spoon to represent 'dinner time'
- **object permanence** – knowing that an object still exists even when a person is no longer in physical contact with the object or when it is out of sight
- **oogly** – a small translucent rubber/plastic toy character which can fit on the top of a pen torch and diffuses light
- **orientation** –
 - (a) direction in which an object or person is facing
 - (b) using information in the environment to work out where you are, where you are going and how to get there
- **over-generalisation** – inaccurate use of a word or concept to refer to a classification of an object or event, eg 'dog' for all animals
- **paediatrician** – a specialist children's doctor
- **palmar grasp** – using the whole hand to hold objects
- **parallel play** – playing alongside and/or with similar materials as an adult or another child, but without a sharing of toys or ideas
- **phrase** – a group of words
- **pincer grasp** – picking up small objects between index (second) finger and thumb

Glossary continued

- **PMO** – paediatric mobility officer
- **play sequence** – when a child does one action to one person and then does it again to another, or does consecutive actions in their play, eg pouring pretend tea for a doll and then drinking it
- **plural** – expressing more than one person, thing or item
- **possessives** – showing ownership in grammatical terms, eg the boy's teddy, Mummy's cup
- **posting** – putting objects into holes
- **postural control** – control of muscles to maintain postures or body positions, eg to stay upright when tilted to one side
- **prepositions** – set of words usually used with nouns or pronouns to show their relation to some other part of the clause, eg in, over, behind, under, beside
- **pretend play** – behaviours such as acting out simple familiar daily routines with a make believe element, often involving an adult partner and toys, eg pretending to drink from a toy cup
- **pronoun** – word which stands in place of a person or object, eg I/he/she/it
- **prone** – lying on your tummy
- **proto-words** – use of a particular sound combination consistently with meaning before using the real word
- **psychologist** – professional working in both health and educational settings who is trained to promote psychological wellbeing and reduce psychological and learning difficulties
- **raspberries** – sounds made by blowing through closed lips
- **recasting** – repeating a child's word and then saying what you think the child is trying to say in a short sentence – 'Juice? You'd like some juice?'
- **receptive language** – words that are combined into phrases or sentences that are understood by the child
- **reflex actions** – range of instinctive actions babies are born with
- **reinforcement** – something that motivates a child to do a specific behaviour or action and immediately follows the behaviour or action – often like a reward
- **release** – controlled, purposeful relaxation of grasp to let go of an object
- **repetitive behaviour** – behaviour that gets repeated for self-stimulation and not for any other apparent purpose
- **reverse or backwards chaining** – a technique for learning where the last step of a task is learnt first and subsequent steps are learnt in reverse order, eg step 4, 3, 2, 1
- **rhythm** – the pattern formed by stressed and unstressed syllables
- **routine** – the usual way tasks or activities are done in everyday life
- **saving response** – putting hand out to the front or side towards the floor if starting to lose balance or fall
- **sensory feedback** – doing something and receiving information back through the senses such as touch, hearing, body positioning or vision
- **reorientating** – to change direction, eg of gaze or movement
- **scaffolding** – providing adult verbal or physical support to assist learning in a manner that gives a framework and guidance, but without taking over control
- **scanning** – movements of the eyes searching to find something, eg one's shoe in a room or the red flower in a complex picture
- **secure separation** – when a child may show brief distress on separation from a parent or carer, but then copes with the separation period knowing that the parent will return later. The return of the parent is often greeted very positively

Glossary continued

- **selective listening** – attending to one source of sound to the exclusion of all others
- **self-concept/identity** – a feeling of individuality and recognition of own characteristics and preferences
- **self-corrects** – when a child realises they have made the wrong choice during an activity and changes to the right solution independently, without adult prompting
- **self-directing** – independently choosing own activities and actions
- **self-regulating** – ability to control strong emotions
- **sensory** – to do with the senses of touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing, movement and balance
- **separation anxiety** – behaviour seen in babies and young children when they're anxious about being separated from their parents or carers and may become distressed when left in the care of others
- **sequence** – a number of things, actions, object or pictures that are arranged in a particular order
- **shared discovery** – how to explore and play with your child with limited vision including how to guide you child's hands to explore and to develop 'joint attention'
- **sibling** – brother or sister
- **single channelled** – attending to only one source of interest at a time
- **situational cues** – things in the environment or behaviour of others that help a child to understand what to expect, eg if Mum puts the child's coat on, gets the car keys and walks to the door, the child will understand that they're going out in the car
- **situational understanding** – shows understanding based on situational cues
- **sociable** – being willing and happy to interact with others
- **social-emotional development** – how children learn who they are, what feelings they have and how to behave. Learning about what other people are like and how they behave and interact with others, learning to develop relationships
- **social referencing** – watching or referring to other people's behaviour such as looking, pointing, talking, to find out what they are attending to and how they are feeling or thinking about something
- **social scripts** – learnt knowledge of how to behave in social situations
- **sound localisation** – the ability to work out where sounds are coming from
- **spatial boundaries** – environmental features such as walls that enclose or mark the outer extremes of specific spaces
- **specialist teacher for visual impairment** – a teacher with specialist qualification for teaching children with visual impairment
- **speech sounds** – the vowels and consonants of a language which make up the phonemes or sounds of words
- **startling** – sudden physical reaction to unexpected event, eg loud noise
- **still or stilling** – to become totally motionless while concentrating on collecting sensory information, eg while listening
- **supine** – lying on your back
- **sustained interest** – attention to a toy or activity for long(er) periods of time
- **syllable** – a unit of spoken language such as a vowel and consonant combination, eg 'biscuit' (bis/cuit) has two syllables

Glossary continued

- **symbolic play** – make believe use of an object to represent a real life object, eg push a brick along saying 'brmm, brmm' (car)
- **symbolic vocalisations** – noises/sounds used to represent an object, person or place which is not the name of the object, person or place, eg 'choo-choo' for train, 'brmm brmm' for car
- **tactile avoidance** – refusal to touch certain textures
- **tactile sensations** – the sense experience of touching textures, materials or objects
- **tactile sensitivity** – distress or discomfort resulting from touching certain textures. Hands are often withdrawn
- **tracking** – movement of the eyes as they keep an object in focus as it rolls along a surface or along a track
- **three-dimensional** – object or space with height, width and depth
- **touch clues** – bits of information about something that is gained through touching it and helps one identify what it is
- **trunk** – the part of the body between the shoulders and hips
- **turn-taking** – where one person in a conversation talks and the other listens, then they exchange roles so that the listener becomes the speaker. Or in turn-taking games, where each partner in the interaction has a turn (eg rolling a ball back and forth)
- **undergeneralisation** – use of words or concepts limited to familiar objects or situations only, eg says 'cup' only for own cup and not for other unfamiliar cups
- **unintelligible** – unable to be understood
- **verb** – an action word, eg 'jump', 'look', 'sleep'
- **vision level**
 - V1 – no vision or light perception only
 - V2 – able to see light reflecting objects
 - V3 – able to see large bright objects (12 cm)
 - V4 – able to see smaller bright objects (2.25 cm)
- **visual acuity** – a measure of how well a child sees the detail of standard black and white materials at different distances, eg letter charts and acuity cards (stripes) used by eye specialists
- **visual awareness** – alerting to or detecting the presence of a visual stimulus
- **visual fields** – the span or arc of vision including peripheral vision (vision at the outer edges) when the child's gaze is forward. This includes horizontal and vertical fields and also nasal field (field across the nose)
- **visual function** – how a child functions visually or uses their vision within the everyday environment
- **visual interest** – looking with interest at a visual lure to learn about it
- **visual lures or targets** – the objects used to attract your child's visual attention and interest and to encourage her/him to look more closely or shift her/his gaze. These could be faces, people, everyday objects, toys, lights etc
- **vocabulary** – all of the words a child knows
- **vocalisation/vocalises** – the production of sounds using our voice
- **vowel sounds** – the sounds in speech represented by the five vowels of the written English alphabet – a, e, i, o, u